

# **CHANGE AND POWER IN THE PROFESSION**

**A study of the lived experiences of  
teachers' opposition and resistance  
within a neoliberal hegemony**

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## **Abstract:**

Schools in England have undergone huge change since neoliberal ideologies introduced notions of choice and competition. This study seeks to understand how teachers rationalised their roles alongside the demands of performativity associated with managerialisation and marketisation. As such, this research explores the lived experiences of teachers within a neoliberal hegemony.

Methodologically, I used a social constructionist paradigm and an interpretative phenomenological analysis after Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). I conducted six in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers in primary, middle and secondary school settings. My interpretative phenomenological analysis used Wenger's (1989) concept of a community of practice as well as concepts from social theorists such as Habermas (1979, 1996), Giddens (1986, 1991) and Bourdieu (1984, 1994) to frame my thinking.

The research found that the changes being experienced by teachers are not aligned with their understandings and beliefs concerning education, either for themselves as a professional body or for the pupils in their care. As such, the teachers express notions such as the suppression of their voice and the oppression of their autonomy.

Furthermore, teachers' descriptions include philosophical and practical resistance to change. The descriptions of change and resistance show alignment towards notions of welfare education not neoliberal managerialisation and marketisation.

The nature of the new knowledge concerns changed forms of organisational experiences, from changed forms of organisational communication to changed forms of learning. It is this change, brought about by managerialisation and marketisation, that the teachers describe as resisting, both philosophically and practically. As such the participants describe a clash of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa, such that they experience ontological insecurity. Furthermore the managerialisation and marketisation of schools is at odds with Wenger's (1989) notion of a community of practice and as such, is degrading organisational learning and practice.

Key words: Education, teachers, community of practice, managerialisation, marketisation, change, resistance, neoliberal.

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I dedicate this thesis to my children: Wilf, a physicist and Ellie, a mathematician, so that they can see that life isn't always so clear cut.

## **Declaration**

I declare that no outputs submitted for this degree have been submitted for a research degree of any other institution. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this commentary has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

I declare that the word count for this thesis is 92,003, excluding the appendices and references.

Name:

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Date:

## **Chapter 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will locate the research both personally and methodologically. I will begin by outlining why this area is of fundamental importance to me and why it has driven me to conduct the study, such that despite my in-depth understanding of schools and the arena of education, I had felt for a number of years that something was not right. I had a sense that my reality of being a teacher was slipping away, yet couldn't quite put my finger on what was wrong. I had an irritating intellectual itch and this study is my attempt to scratch that itch.

First, I outline what learning means to me, because this research uses a notion of learning throughout. Then I outline the issues for me and the research questions which flow from the issues. Following this, I outline the aims of this research which will include my research questions.

I have located this study both philosophically and methodologically and have outlined my research framework and paradigms. I have felt it necessary to discuss the role of philosophies in my thinking so that the reader can follow the flow from my philosophical stance via my ontology and my epistemology. I have also felt it necessary to discuss postmodernism and my version of social constructionism, as this has implications for my analysis and impacts on my findings.

Flowing from my philosophical stance, I have considered how this rests within my methodological procedural assumptions. This then leads to a discussion of my use of interpretative phenomenological analysis. This in turn leads to a discussion of my research strategy, then the procedural sections of my research, finishing with a section on how I analysed my data.

#### **1.1.2 Locating my research personally**

I have been a secondary school teacher for 27 years, teaching in many contexts both abroad and in England. For a number of years, I was a school leader with responsibility for staff development. My role involved developing and monitoring the systems and structures which supported teachers (and eventually support staff) in their continuing professional development (CPD). My role included the planning and delivery of after school twilight sessions, training days, the monitoring and evaluation of teachers



attending courses, as well as coaching individuals on various National College leadership programmes. This was a role I loved, because for me it involved the ‘bread and butter’ of school improvement, that being staff development.

However, the demands for me to change what I offered to teachers in terms of their CPD were directly related to those individuals’ performance. As such teachers’ CPD became focused on raising the examination grades of pupils or performing in their classrooms in a way that models expectations and then categorises them as a number (one = outstanding to four = inadequate). The sustenance for teachers to continue learning throughout their careers became controlled by an outside agency directly linked to government. Even when, in my capacity as the leader for CPD, I planned and mapped out learning needs based on what the teachers said they wanted, I knew it was not good enough because of the dominant discourse of Ofsted.

Few teachers join the profession to contribute to school improvement. They join because they love the pupils or have a passion for their subject and want to share that with the pupils. This is why two fifths of teachers leave the profession within five years and few teachers work until retirement age, citing stress, excessive workloads, bureaucracy and pupil behaviour as the main causes of their dissatisfaction (Barmby, 2006). This is a pertinent issue, as retention of teachers until older age is essential to avoid even worse shortages than currently exist. What is the nature of this teacher turnover and wastage (Smithers and Robinson, 2004)? Is it an expression of their voicelessness or lack of autonomy within the profession? Furthermore, if the educational establishment does not model an example of good practice in the development and learning of its teachers, how can it support a practice that has to develop and promote learning amongst its young people, preparing those young people for a world of work that is evolving at an ever increasing rate?

Therefore, this research is about how teachers perceive changes in their lived experiences as teachers. As such, this research focuses on how teachers make sense of their everyday lives within a neoliberal society.

### **1.1.3 My notions of learning**

Because this research involves much discussion around the notion of learning, I want to be clear from the onset about my notions of learning and the theoretical framework behind those concepts. I feel this is important so that the reader will be aware of this

thread as it weaves throughout the whole thesis. However, I can only do this briefly as a more detailed outline of my understanding of learning would dominate this thesis.

This research rejects behaviourist and cognitive theories of learning in favour of social theories (Lave, 1988, Lave and Wenger, 1991) and uses Wenger's (1989) concept of communities of practice as a theoretical framework to illuminate teachers' understandings. Within this conceptual framework is the understanding that andragogy (Knowles, 1978) includes an autonomous voice when deciding a learning trajectory.

I will use the term *community of practice* after Wenger (1998) to help structure my discourse and findings. Wenger has noted that "learning is the engine of practice and practice is the history of that learning" (ibid). As such, I want to investigate the practice of teachers in order to explore their learning. Furthermore, Wenger's concept is one of institutional learning and so forms a suitable framework with which to study learning in schools. Wenger also describes social practice within a community of practice as one which includes "relations, conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, recognised intuitions, specific perceptions, well-tuned sensitivities, embodied understandings, underlying assumptions and shared world views", and it is these notions that I am exploring in this research.

### **1.2.1 The Issue**

As outlined above, the issues for me concern how teachers perceive their lived experiences. In schools in England there is currently a dominant discourse focusing on accountability and performativity and the outside agenda of Ofsted appears to dictate forms of teacher learning. The dilemma appears to be that teachers' autonomous voices have been lost amid the dominant discourse of accountability and performativity and so teachers have lost their professional power. As such, there is a central theme regarding neoliberal notions of marketisation and managerialisation.

### **1.2.2 The research aims**

Following on from these issues, this study sets out to explore the lived experience of teachers' learning within a community of practice and how teachers perceive their own professional practice within a changed hegemony. This research will explore how teachers engage in a community of practice to find what helps and what hinders their engagement. In so doing, the research will also delve into the nature of the learning

experience of teachers in that it will drill down into their lived experiences of the learning opportunities offered organisationally and within their communities of practice.

This research will consider the future benefits to teachers and schools of a change in practice for teacher engagement, which may improve retention and reduce teacher turnover and wastage. This change will encompass what teachers perceive as being valuable to their everyday lives as teachers, including their learning, as well as how the whole profession can look afresh at its position within society in general.

### **1.2.3 Research questions**

My initial research questions focused solely on teacher learning. However, as I have journeyed through this PhD, my focus has changed dramatically because of my new understandings. My understanding has been challenged both by the literature and by participants' descriptions of their lives as teachers. As such, my focus moved from one looking at the nature of teachers' learning to one that looks at perceptions of professional practice in a community of practice heavily influenced by neoliberal marketisation and managerialisation. As stated earlier, I began this PhD because I had an intellectual itch that I couldn't scratch. The new perspectives brought about by both the literature and my participants' words have enabled me to access that itch; the itch being a neoliberal hegemony. Whilst a dictionary definition of hegemony includes the political, economic or military control over people, I will use the term to denote its meaning as one of a political relationship between the power of a dominant discourse over sections of society. This notion of hegemony enables some to act in ways that are not beneficial to themselves, after Laclau and Mouffe (2001), who developed their notion of hegemony after Gramsci (1971). These concepts have heavily influenced both the philosophical and methodological bases of this research.

### **1.3.1 Locating my research philosophically and methodologically**

This section describes the philosophical and methodological principles that are the foundations of the study. Here, I set out how the methods used and the philosophical understandings will address my research questions. This then becomes the guide for the reader to distinguish the structure of the study (Remenyi et al., 1998).

However, before I continue I would like to draw the reader's attention to some issues around qualitative research via the words of Denzin and Lincoln (2000, page 1047):

“There is an elusive centre emerging in this contradictory, tension riddled enterprise. We seem to be moving farther away from the grand narratives and single, overarching ontological, epistemological, and methodological paradigms. The centre lies in the humanistic commitment of the qualitative researcher to study the world always from the perspective of the gendered, historically situated, interacting individual.”

What is written under each heading below has certainly been a “tension riddled enterprise”, as I have struggled to align my thinking along the varying continuums of thinking about and knowing about our world. As this study unfolds, I hope you will come to appreciate my own ‘humanistic commitment’ to creating a better understanding of the world in which we live.

In the following sections, I will outline the role of philosophies on my thinking and how this has influenced my research methodology. I will outline my understanding of knowledge creation via an acknowledgement of the importance of language, culture and experience. I also discuss how my epistemology has led to the use of social constructionism as my methodological lens; how this relativist approach will be reflected in my research findings; and how these philosophical underpinnings link to the nature of what is found. My research approach is then explored via my understanding of phenomenology. Following this, I will consider the influence of the researcher’s self and identity on the research methodology to show how this understanding helps shape the research, adds depth to the findings and allows a reflexive approach. This section seeks to critically reflect upon the researcher’s self and identity to illuminate the research findings and not constrain them; in other words, to acknowledge my itch.

### **1.3.2 Research Framework**

It is important to begin by considering the researcher’s philosophical assumptions which will underpin this study. This is important because these world views, beliefs and attitudes are all part of the interconnectedness of the research as they are embedded in my thinking. However, it is equally important to acknowledge here that my thinking has altered considerably during this learning journey. I am not the same person as I was three years ago and I certainly do not think in the same way. These new perspectives help to determine how I have chosen to engage with the study, understand organisations within the study and the people within those organisations. These assumptions make up my stance on my reality (my ontology), how I know what I know (my epistemology),

the role of ethics in the research, the language of the research and the methods used (Creswell, 2003). The role of philosophies is fundamental as it informs me of the complex nature of this enquiry as well as alerting me to different paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As such researchers, both implicitly and explicitly, approach their discipline via certain rules, norms or expectations. This research is phenomenological, so it has certain features and criteria that have moulded and guided the project strategy.

### 1.3.3 Paradigms

This study is an interpretative research project, so it is absolutely not from the positivist scientific tradition. It is understood that realisms, truths and certainties will vary between different groups and settings. As I have already outlined, this study uses a phenomenological approach and as such, assumes that exploring an experience should only be done via interpretation (Prasad, 2005), which must therefore acknowledge my subjectivity in the interpretative process.

This research is interested in “reality as a quality appertaining to phenomena” (Berger and Luckman, 1966, page 21) and is looking at qualities of things in an educational context such as organisational systems and structures. As such, any claim of knowledge made by this study are made only on the basis that knowledge is based on the phenomena being relative depending on its characteristics. This situates the study in a relativist paradigm rather than a realist paradigm, which is explored further in this chapter. The detail of these research paradigms will be further explored in the sections on ‘knowing what we know’ and epistemology – but first it is important to describe how those stances were reached; something I will do in the next section.

### 1.3.4 Role of Philosophies

The role of philosophies in research cannot be understated, as they raise awareness of researcher paradigms and influence research paradigms; as such, they shape how we consider knowledge construction (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). It is therefore important for me to briefly illustrate my thinking as a backdrop to my epistemological understanding via a historical account of the early stages of my PhD journey, in which I travelled through dusty tomes with yellowing pages that smell of damp. This was the beginning of my metamorphosis from teacher to researcher.

Hume (1711-1777) helped me to begin to clarify my thoughts by describing the two ways we perceive the world; firstly by *impressions*, then by using these impressions to

think and reason. Kant (1724-1804) added to this by arguing that knowledge is based on subjective experiences from external entities that affect the senses, and understanding is encapsulated by the activity of the mind. Even the logical mathematician Husserl (1859-1938) agreed that his methods needed the exclusion of all assumptions about external matters, acknowledging that our minds do make assumptions. He went on to say the content of our experiences varies for each person “each has his place whence he sees the things that are present, and each enjoys accordingly different appearances of things”. (Husserl, 1913, from Collinson, 1987, page 95)

Nietzsche (1844-1900) touched on the same area when he discussed his ideas around common sense; not that he says common sense gives a correct view, but rather, that shared senses supply the perspectives by which we can live together. Wittgenstein (1889-1951) added to my understanding by outlining how essential language is to our understanding of things. He argued that it is via our words that we understand our thoughts, so that a human must be exposed to external language before she/he can turn to private thoughts. These ideas moulded my way of thinking, especially after I read about Gadamer (1900-2002), who suggested that we are initiated into ways of seeing by our culture. Given these ideas, it appears that if our thoughts are based on our language and our culture initiates us using this language, then our thoughts are culturally based. This has since been supported by Vygotsky’s (1896-1934) idea of the ‘zone of proximal development’, which suggests that humans know things twice; first in the group, which is influenced by culture and history, and secondly in the mind of the individual. These concepts form the foundations of my later sections and my epistemology, but first I want to outline how I feel postmodernism is important to this study.

### **1.3.5 The importance of postmodernism to the research**

Postmodernism is a way of viewing the world which states that the historical meta narratives such as the belief in scientific knowledge, nationhood and religion have been challenged to such a degree that a plurality of ways of knowing now exists. The consensus is that postmodernism grew from a suspicion that science and understanding cannot answer all of life’s questions and that reality is probably more than the sum of our understanding. It was just this epistemological conundrum, the plurality of different types of arguments, which I found so difficult during the earlier part of my PhD journey. I needed to find my own lens through which to view the world. For me, this epistemological emancipation was brought about by postmodernism, which is important

to my research as it allows me to formulate a very personal way of knowing about the world. Postmodernism allows me to place my thoughts and opinions along other spectrums and continuums of understanding. Therefore, postmodernism speaks to me, as it is sceptical of generalised conclusions and instead promotes individual experience and how we interpret that experience for ourselves as important, not the collective universal laws seen by others and applied to the masses.

Furthermore, postmodernism is important to this research, as it is this notion, via the work of Lyotard (1979), that introduces us to performativity. According to Lyotard, society's current focus on performativity has been brought about by institutions losing faith in science and scientific knowledge, knowledge which focused its work on human emancipation. This resulted in institutions looking inward, deciding that if uncertainties exist outside then they should focus on what they do inside, but do it better. This is what has happened in our schools; they have stopped striving for the emancipation of humans based on scientific, religious and other forms of knowledge and have instead focused on doing what they perceive that they do, but in a better way. In order to judge improvements, standardisation needs to take place, so that a common curriculum needs to be established with common goals or tests allowing comparison. It is this ability to standardise and compare which allows for the performativity agenda.

As a plurality of understandings has been established, our institutions have turned away from this epistemological quagmire and sought solace in performativity and, in so doing, have taken away the emancipation narrative and the notion that higher learning will produce ever higher degrees of emancipation (Lyotard, 1979). As such, for me, postmodernism presents us with a fascinating irony in that the loss of faith in scientific knowledge, formerly driven by the desire for human emancipation and capitalism, has led to epistemological emancipation, which in turn has led to the performativity agenda, thereby enslaving humans to reified institutional targets. The irony being that epistemological emancipation has led to a new form of human slavery or false endeavour.

A second irony for me occurs as performativity is focused on a positivist epistemology and is driven by a desire to enumerate reification. The irony being that epistemological emancipation actually promotes epistemological incarceration via notions of Fordism and industrialisation paradigms and the reification of targets in number form; that is, the

methodological freedoms of postmodernism have gone in favour of a positivist, quantitative methodology. For example, teachers are enumerated during a lesson observation via a judgement on how well the pupils in the lesson are perceived to be learning. These teacher enumerations are then totalled and a judgement is made as to how well a school is deemed to be performing. It is with these thoughts that when I use the word *performativity* later in this work, I acknowledge Lyotard.

However, I must also add a word of caution; although postmodernism is relevant to this work because of the resulting epistemological emancipation and its relevance to institutional performativity, both are notions articulated by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), Lyotard himself criticised this work, saying he hadn't read some of the books he references and that this was his worst book (Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, I must acknowledge criticism of postmodernism itself, particularly the views of Giddens (1991), who considers postmodernism not a discontinuity but just an addition to the modern phase characterised by universality and radicalisation (Giddens, 1991). I would also add that it is within this radicalisation that epistemological emancipation has occurred and certainly performativity as a notion is a strong presence amongst our public service institutions. Before we consider this situation further, I want to outline my perspectives on the nature of knowledge.

### **1.3.6 Knowing what we know**

Because facts are interdependent with theory and are therefore only facts within a theoretical framework (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), it follows that if theories are built on what is seen, then they are constructed – and if data is collected for theoretical interpretation, then that is also constructed. Likewise, the language used and the meanings derived from theories or laws are also constructed. Given my understanding of how human knowledge is created as outlined above, I cannot see how to separate the knower from the known or the observer from the observed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore it is impossible for the observer not to influence the observed. Because of this, empirical data can be viewed as inconsistent; not just because of the collector or the theory behind the desire to collect empirically, but by the methods used to increase rigour by reducing variables in the data or 'context stripping' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999). Correspondingly, quantitative enquiries miss out on the human point of view, the individuals within a group, or other ways of thinking (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).



I chose the methodological stance of social constructionism through which to conduct this research. For me, social constructionism seeks to resolve the issue of what is the nature of reality, something which is associated with postmodernism. Burr (2003), a writer and researcher on social constructionism, has acknowledged many significant influences on her work, most notably Berger and Luckmann (1991), who have marked as being influential in their work authors such as Mead and Durkheim. Therefore, social constructionism is an amalgam of influences, tracing its threads back to Mead's symbolic interaction, and this way of thinking about the world and how we co-construct it resonates with me.

As such, my view of social constructionism is one which focuses on how the world is understood without reference to any objective reality of a natural world. However, this very understanding poses difficulties for social constructionist research as it is often criticised (Willig, 2013) for making claims beyond its social understanding of the world. This difference, as I see it, also sets social constructionism apart from critical realism in that critical realism accepts a notion of a mind dependant world but seeks to understand the world in a mind independent way.

Furthermore, Blumer's (1967) point about meanings being changed by an interpretative processes then utilised, supports Burr's view that before sense-making can occur, all of our incoming information is filtered through three lenses; the cultural lens, the historical lens and the lens of social practice (Burr, 2003). This point also reflects Blumer, who states that people interact via the meanings things have for them. In other words, how we act on the basis of our understanding once information has passed through these lenses. This point is essential to my research as I am exploring how teachers perceive their own lived experiences via these lenses and how their perceptions of their role as a cultural concept impact on their opportunities to learn.

The perspectives described above originated from my understanding of Mead (1934) and Cooley's (1902) symbolic interaction. My understanding of this notion has been enhanced by reading Gergen (1977, 1999) who describes eloquently how "the ways in which we describe and explain the world are the outcomes of relationships" (2001, pages 804-5). Mead adds to this when stating that a person's identity comes to reflect the views of those around her/him, and their views of themselves are a product of their

social environment. This is a key element of my research, as I am exploring teachers' perceptions of themselves as learners within the social environment of the school.

Social constructionism sees the social world as being socially created via human interaction and language. This exploration acknowledges that teachers, as humans, construct their own versions of educational knowledge during their daily interactions with one another in this community of practice. Therefore it is within their use of language that they will articulate their understanding of their practices, beliefs and forms of educational knowledge, which are held within the community of practice. This study will look at the relationship between language and thought, and language and action. It is concerned with the way teachers use cognitive tools such as symbols; the most important of which for this study is the use of words. This cognition or thinking using symbols is done individually, communally, intra-personally and inter-personally. As such, when teachers meet and discuss policies, the end product (e.g. a policy change) is communally constructed and each person at the meeting takes away with them an individual version of that communally constructed version.

It is because these understandings are negotiated that the research must also acknowledge that power plays a critical role in teachers' understanding, as this power decides what is permissible and what is not, according to the rights and duties as understood by these teachers. This research will use a definition of power developed by Foucault (Danaher et al., 2000), not one which takes power as a dominance (Weber, 1978). Foucault refers to the concept that meanings, ideas, rules, knowledge and 'truths' have not arisen out of nowhere, but have been created to support, give an advantage or validate a particular standpoint. It is these standpoints that I want to explore in my research. However, whilst I will be interested in Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth' within the social organisation of teachers, I will not be treating the discourses themselves as objects, as Foucault did, as this draws attention away from indexicality. Furthermore, I will analyse the transcripts looking for power in the discourse that constrains the truth or whether there are any exclusions within the discourse that may add weight to a different point of view. For me, discourse "links factuality to institutions and issues of power, on the one hand, and to individuals and their practices, on the other, thus making discourse the central dynamic of the system" (Potter, 1996, page 86). Within this notion, I will try to locate three levels of power; firstly the macro level, which will form the perceived impacts of the state on the lived experience of

teachers in terms of governmental influence, changing policies and a performativity agenda. Secondly, I will locate impacts of meso power in terms of the institutional impacts on the lived experiences of teachers in their day to day lives and how they perceive the mediation between the power of the state and the power of the institution. Finally, I will look at power at a micro level in terms of how the local community of practice negotiates its way around the power of the state and the institution.

However, it is understood that these communally created practices, beliefs and forms of educational knowledge are not shared equally, as some members of this community have a more dominant voice. For example, a head of department may hold the dominant discourse during a departmental meeting. Although by using positioning theory, rather than role theory, this study understands that a dominant voice is only dominant if the individual allows it (Harre, 1999). It is within the aims of this research to seek to explore the participants' thinking about their learning within their community of practice. As such, it is within Harre's (1999) domain of 'positioning theory' that the research explores teachers' descriptions regarding their concepts of 'rights and duties', what they seek to take up, ascribe to or refuse to take up, within their experiences of everyday life in schools. Furthermore, this research explores differences in the outlooks of the 'rights and duties' as conceived by teachers compared to the 'rights and duties' as conceived by school leaders and policy makers.

This study looks at the social conventions, reifications, perceptions and knowledge of teachers' lived experience. That lived experience presents itself as a reality to those teachers and is meaningful to them, so their world is coherent. It is a world of work based on accepted knowledge which has emerged via teachers' thoughts and actions, and as such, is held as real to them. It is their common sense construction of the world that is the foundation of this accepted knowledge. The notion of common sense is explored later via Nietzsche (1844-1900). This makes their everyday lived experience an ordered reality in which phenomena appear defined and well-structured, in that objects have co-constructed definitions and language itself provides a communication structure to maintain that order.

As such, my research explores the world of experience as lived by teachers working in a social situation; their community of practice. It is within this social situation that teachers construct their meaning. Whilst meaning does not exist as an entity, but is co-

constructed as teachers interact and engage in their business, it is the researcher's job to understand these multiple social constructions and to locate teachers' meaning and knowledge. Hence, I will now discuss what these perspectives mean for me.

### 1.3.7 Epistemology

This research is interpretative, acknowledging the subjective meaning of social action, in that the reality of teachers' worlds becomes meaningful for their intent, their relationships with others and how they see the world. As such, interpretative methods will be used to make sense of the subjective meanings of actions described by teachers made via their communications, which in turn reflect their individual perspectives. I will attempt to understand the subjective meanings of the participants' words and so explore their worlds via their words.

As outlined above, this study is situated within a constructivist and interpretative (Weber, 1978) paradigm. I have chosen to follow a constructionist paradigm because I want to be critical of the 'taken for granted' knowledge that already exists around teachers' lived experiences in a community of practice, and impacts of those teachers' experience of leadership decisions (Burr, 2003). I want to consider historical and cultural aspects of my case study and want these to be part of how the participants and I derive meaning about learning within a community of practice. Wenger (1989) describes institutional learning as a process of both participation and reification, where reification involves the treatment of abstractions as substantially existing or as a concrete object. For me, he is viewing reification as a form of social construction, further emphasising the necessity for use of a social constructionist methodology. Moreover, Wenger describes social practice within a community of practice as one which includes "relations, conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, recognised intuitions, specific perceptions, well-tuned sensitivities, embodied understandings, underlying assumptions and shared world views" (1989, page 47), all of which are socially constructed.

My role will be to find the participants' definition of the situation; the understanding of the meaning of action from the actor's point of view, which is sometimes referred to as *Verstehen* (Weber, 1963). The end result of this research will be my construction of the *constructions* of the participants. In order to do this I must find out:

- I. How have the people in this setting constructed reality?

- II. What are their reported perceptions, explanations, beliefs and world view?
- III. What are the consequences for their behaviours and for those with whom they interact?

I will use interpretative phenomenological analysis of the interview transcripts to help make sense of the above three points. However, before I go on to discuss those methodological positions more fully, I want to define my relativist stance because by utilising a social constructionist methodological approach, it appears (Berger and Luckman, 1966) that I must accept relativist ontology.

### 1.3.8 Relativist/Realist positioning

Relativism is a postmodernist philosophical perspective whose definition can be lost in such statements as ‘all truth is relative’, making it vulnerable to abuse and confusion (Drummond, 2005). I have previously outlined the importance of postmodernism and used the word ‘relativism’ to describe my methodological positioning in that postmodern context. However, I also want the reader understand my stance on social constructionism, as this is a term which has been used to cover a spectrum of approaches.

Realism is a notion that states that there is a world existing regardless of human thought or interpretation, and this reality underpins our thoughts and perceptions of it. On the other hand, relativism states that any such reality is not accessible to us, and that nothing exists beyond language. This is a major problem for me as a researcher because on one hand, I cannot accept that humans do not socially construct their understandings via language and thoughts, there is too much evidence for this in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge literature (Potter, 1996), unsettling any realist claims to knowledge. Yet a relativist position points to all accounts being equally valid, with each one able to claim legitimacy, so no account can be preferable to another. If all accounts are equally valid then what is the point of research?

Viewed in this simplistic way, it appears that at one end of the continuum lies realism, which ignores how we construct our interpretations of the world and assures us that what is reported is the truth and that something is knowable; but at the other end of the continuum is a relativist approach, which can never lead to anything being knowable or definite – an acceptance of multiple realities. Despite social construction after Berger

and Luckman (1991), making no claims to an ontology, I feel this is not good enough for the reader and that I should make my position clear, especially as my major methodological paradigm is social constructionism and this '*realist-relativist*' debate is often used to criticise social constructionism.

I take issue with the relativist position because it does not enhance our understanding of teachers and their lived experiences. Furthermore, if I position myself as a relativist, then where do I place my moral accountability? If all accounts are valid, then so are honour killings and creationist accounts. Pope Benedict XVI, in a speech given in June 2005, showed that the issue of relativism is as contentious today as it was in Ancient Greece, saying "Today, a particularly insidious obstacle to the task of educating is the massive presence in our society and culture of that relativism which, recognising nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires." (In our Time, Radio 4, 2006). While I do not agree with this statement as it reflects a focus on sexual morality, it does help focus relativism towards a nihilist account. As such, if I take a relativist stance in terms of my political actions, I have to step away from the debate and become just an observer, which is something I do not want to do.

My version of social constructionism is not one which denies that aspects of the world exists outside of our language and thoughts (Burr, 2003), or that it is so much on the margins of our experiences as to be irrelevant. My version of social constructionism is one which positions me inbetween the two extremes of realism and relativism outlined above. Here, I acknowledge the existence of an independent reality, a place or form that exists regardless of a human presence, but that humans have little access to that reality. In this mid-point, I acknowledge Heidegger (1996) who said everything is historical, the words we use and the thoughts we have are all historically pre-loaded. I use the term pre-loaded like Gadamer's '*prejudice*' (1975), a notion which says we are initiated into becoming individuals by being brought up in a culture which provides us with our insights into the world via given concepts and frameworks of understanding. It is our language that produces our form and order. From the moment I was brought into the world and declared a '*boy*' by the midwife, I have been scaffolded by given concepts and frameworks so richly layered that any reality that may exist is lost in a fog of cultural conceptual confusion.

This middle route was acknowledged by Hammersley (1992) who termed it ‘subtle realism’ and sets the researcher role as one of representing social phenomena not reproducing it. Furthermore, this middle position is supported by Sismondo (1993) who sought to distinguish between different aspects of social constructionism and differentiate the positions of strict or radical social constructionism with mild or contextual constructionism. According to Sismondo, this distinction avoids the criticism of social constructionism which is said to deny physical reality, in particular the destructive forces of natural disasters.

This stance allows me to gather my moral integrity and continue taking actions via a political point of view, something vital as we shall see in the next section. It also acknowledges that my research can make claims to new knowledge, within a certain framework, and as such, may be able to make recommendations or improvements to teachers’ lives.

My research is not seeking absolutes but I have found ‘truths’ according to Guba (1987), which are ‘consensuses’ among informed constructors. And I have discovered ‘facts’ that have meaning within the value frameworks (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) of me as the researcher and the participants, the researched. Furthermore, any phenomena identified can only be understood within the context of my research, although as we shall see, this context can be expanded to a range of welfare institutions. My research attempts to reach a consensus on what the experience has meant to me and the participants. Hence, this study takes a methodological stance that allows my own cultural conventions to be added into the research melting pot alongside the cultures of others.

My data will form the insider account of behaviour in terms meaningful to the participants due to my extensive experience as a teacher, whilst my outsider position will enable a description of that account based on my new perspectives as a researcher. Consequently, I want to discuss the nature of the current cultural conventions my participants find themselves working within, so it is necessary to consider historical, political perspectives as a context to this research.

### **1.3.9 Locating the study politically - A Historical perspective on Neoliberalism**

The above section outlining my notions of social constructionism was vital to set the scene for this section, as it is the lens through which I view the perspectives described next. Its basic assumptions are that our understandings and the meaning derived from

those understandings are developed socially (Gergen, 2009), in coordination with other humans. There are two key elements to this theory, both relevant to the study of neoliberalism; firstly that we attempt to rationalise our experiences by creating a model of our social world (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) and how it functions (the model and function of neoliberalism), and secondly that the language we use is essential in constructing that reality (the vocabulary of neoliberalism) (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, social constructs cannot be considered products of a single mind, but the accumulated constructions of countless human decisions and conversations. Social construction is essential in the understanding of neoliberalism as it enables a researcher to look at ways social phenomena are created or known about. However, it must be noted that social constructionism is not stagnant; it is an ongoing process and is therefore difficult for a single researcher to state definitive conclusions regarding a phenomenon at any one point before those understandings have moved on. All they can do is offer a snapshot of a point in time. This research is therefore a snapshot of teachers' lived experiences through a neoliberal hegemony.

To help the reader follow my thinking in this section, I describe the context in which neoliberalism grew historically, including the rationale for welfare liberalism and the rationale for a change in thinking, as well as a brief consideration of some of the characters involved. I then consider Foucault's notion of governmentality and 'conduct of conduct', how this adds perspectives to the historical context and why this perspective is important to my research. The discussion then considers change in terms of paradigm shifts and finally I attempt to draw together Foucault's perspectives on 'government at arm's length' (Foucault, 1991) compared to neoliberal managerialisation (Clarke et al., 2000) which has altered this perspective.

As stated above, our understandings and the meaning derived from those understandings are accumulative and ongoing, so it seems naive to begin a section on neoliberalism with its inception, as there was no such thing. What did exist was the 'perfect storm' of circumstances and characters, which enabled tentative and formative early constructions of neoliberalism. With a backdrop of post-war social policy being criticised (Hayek, 1944), the 'perfect storm' occurred around the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s when Reagan, then President of the USA and Thatcher, then Prime Minister of the UK were struggling to manage the economies of their respective states. Add to this the backdrop of China, which began to mix its one-party communism with an



opening up of capitalist markets, then the collapse of communist Soviet Union. Thus, out of this melting pot of change emerged a new construct, a new way of thinking, which in turn led to neoliberalism.

But before I rush ahead, neoliberalism needs to be given a context, firstly by defining the purpose of governments and secondly the historical context of liberalism.

Government is no longer about reinforcing the power of a monarch or single group, but has a new reasoning in that the state seeks its own flourishing (Rose, 1999) and in doing so, has its own rationale utilising all in its power to direct its subjects into this flourishing. For this reason, it is impossible to conduct research in our current political environment without attempting to understand this rationale, which by its nature is complex and multi-dimensional, and uses its own technical apparatus and discursive structures (Doherty, 2007).

The historical context for our current dominant political and economic paradigm began during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was perceived by the church and the state that classical liberalism via philanthropy and increasing regulation had failed to compensate for poverty and social disintegration, especially in response to the plight of the urban poor. The balance of an individual's liberty to thrive or die was perceived as little liberty at all and new welfare liberalism or welfare capitalism (Jones, 2014) emerged. It is this liberalism that has become the dominant political paradigm of the modern era and concerns itself with maintaining two distinct elements of modern political thinking; the market and society. This thinking is that without the market, society cannot thrive, as it will be economically poor and could not afford welfare. If society is in disarray, then the market cannot function as it has neither *human capital* nor *consumers*; the Keynesian welfare state.

Adam Smith (1723-1790), an early economic theorist and thinker, suggested that commerce could link to the state in that the role of the state was to oil the wheels of commerce. Although Smith is often misquoted as saying 'greed is good', he did consider that commerce was the system and he coined the phrase 'the invisible hand', in that mercantile principles of profit and loss underpin commercial markets. Therefore, it is this invisible hand which creates an economically successful state, not the decision making of its government. However, even for Smith, who considered that laws should rule, not men, some areas should remain apart from the 'invisible hand'. In his time, he

considered that shipping should be protected because of its strategic military importance. Foucault went further according to Lemke (2001), in that he saw neoliberalism as having no basis for any intrinsic laws which drive market forces; instead he suggested that the market needs to be kept alive via various political interventions which support neoliberal principles. So neoliberalism can only be seen as a construct.

During the mid-twentieth century, there was a milieu of economic thinking, drawing on Smith's notions, associated with the School of Austria, led by Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek and Joseph Schumpeter, which centred on the fundamental understanding of individualism and the competitive market via principles such as *private property*, again a social construct, rather than centralised state interference. While the notion of individualism can be associated with positively perceived concepts such as personal autonomy and self-reliance, it can also have a darker side. The notion of individualism re-draws the relations we have with our community and others outside our immediate family. If we accept that as individuals, we must take responsibility for our lives, then it follows that we expect others to do the same, thus undermining principles of collectivism or paternal, caring notions towards those less fortunate than ourselves. This altering of perspectives allows for previously unknown phrases to exist, such as the 'undeserving poor', positioning the individual who is poor as a culprit not a victim.

However, I have raced ahead. The 1947 meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, founded by Hayek, would have to wait before the likes of Reagan and Thatcher could begin to voice their support, because post-war Europe brought about great social change. The bringing together of classes and exposure of different groups of people had a levelling effect on post-war society, such that former establishment figures found their previously ill-conceived notions of the working class were shattered and vice-versa (Hennessey, 2006). This new found social capital, summed up in the notion of the 'Dunkirk spirit', helped consolidate a post-war era of welfare capitalism with a state ethos of paternalism, whereby it was seen that an active government was necessary for a healthy and stable society – notions also held by those in power. However, as stated previously, human constructions change over time and the Austrian school of thought, based on individualism and the competitive market, found a foot hold elsewhere. Consequently, this way of seeing the world economically was coupled with the Chicago School, associated with Milton Friedman, who saw the state as not only an interference, but

actually harmful to free market thinking (Barnett, 2008). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Harvey, 2005) sums up the resultant thinking that poured from the melting pot of ideas in the late 1970s:

*“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.”* (Harvey 2005, page 2)

Within the historical context, I feel it necessary to consider some of the main characters stirring that melting pot. With the combination of the Austrian and Chicago Schools as an economic backdrop, I want to consider first Reagan and then Thatcher. The seductive rhetoric of *freedom* (Barnett, 2008) voiced by these schools would have resonated with Reagan as it is a similar rhetoric to that used by Locke, in that all men are equal and the state is only there to allow liberty and not to control its people. Hence, Reagan’s rhetorical mantra of ‘getting government off the backs of the people’.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, Thatcher was also stirring the melting pot and adding her own ingredients; not the seductive rhetoric of *freedom* that had been adopted by British anarchists, but by her own education and therefore ways of speaking and thinking. Thatcher was a product of a grammar school and studied chemistry at Cambridge, later funding her political activity through chemistry research. Here I want to make two points; firstly that Thatcher could be considered the epitome of success via the notion of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964); she was given the opportunity,

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<sup>1</sup> If neoliberalism continues, will we see a point at which Hobbes’ prediction becomes a reality in that humans will eventually fight it out and end up killing each other, as welfare declines and the gap between rich and poor escalates, creating in turn the need for a strong controlling state?

rose to the challenge, and contributed well to industry (by being part of the team which invented soft scoop ice cream). This would have helped guide her thinking into how the state should only be there to support the markets, in this case via education. Secondly, Thatcher's epistemology as a chemistry graduate and researcher embodies a positivist, quantitative paradigm. This Cartesian perspective would have helped her see a route to quantify state assets and therefore visualise how those assets may then be privatised, epitomised by her rhetorical mantra of: 'too much state living off the backs of the people'. Here we see both Reagan and Thatcher using language in a way so as to construct different ways of seeing the world; they were constructing the language of neoliberalism.

The appeal of Locke's notions of freedom, alongside Thatcher's epistemology and success via a model of human capital plus the fall of communism and the flight of jobs to emerging nations, epitomised by the bankruptcy of British Leyland in 1975, helped the actors involved construct the notion of neoliberalism. Using a Marxist understanding which seeks to explain the 'why' behind capital accumulation and state power, the above commentary begins to explain the 'why' behind the move towards neoliberalism, namely the fear of globalisation (Hay, 2002), a notion perceived as preventing the state from flourishing. Add to this Marx's understanding of social construction (though not labelled as such), in that human thought is founded in human activity and through the associated social relations of that activity, we can see that these early players formed the 'substructure' of neoliberalism in readiness for the 'superstructure' of neoliberalism we see today. For me, an interesting question is: how did we go from that neoliberal 'substructure' to our current neoliberal 'superstructure'? For me it was socially constructed.

This construction was aided by a media controlled by neoliberal thinkers (Chomsky, 1999) and legitimised by the current events of the time such as power cuts, unemployment and industrial unrest. At this point, it could be argued that neoliberal thinking became a mob psychology (Lakatos, 1970). Not even a change of government in 1997 from Conservative to Labour changed the neoliberal agenda and some argue that New Labour further embedded neoliberalism by allowing privatisation in the NHS and actively promoting a model of human capital in schools (Clarke et al., 2000). No wonder then, that when asked what was her greatest achievement, Margaret Thatcher answered "Tony Blair and New Labour" (Burns, 2008). But we can't lay blame

individually because these neoliberal ways of seeing the world are just the current ways that help us to rationalise, and so justify, certain political positions. Thus, they are now our collective ‘common sense’ way of viewing the world; as much a fact of life as the weather is. Nevertheless, this leaves our service sectors, including education, functioning within a business model, or at least working towards a business model. Consequently, the language of welfare has changed, as highlighted by McKnight in Illich’s *Disabling Professions* as early as 1977:

“Professionals and their managers now speak of education “products”, health “consumers” and a legal “industry”. Clients are defined as “markets”... Computers measure and store psychological “inputs” and family “outputs”.” (1977, page 69)

Other, perhaps more insidious forces also play their part in that it is not only the taking up of neoliberal positions that promotes a new way of thinking and doing, but also the driving back of opposing views (Jones, 2014), such as collective organisational structures that might begin to challenge the new paradigm, for example the trade unions, whose rapid decline runs parallel to neoliberalism’s rise.

Foucault (1926-1984) perceived the modern state as a cumulative effect of governmentalisation (Foucault, 1991), one where the state interferes in society with the justification of the flourishing needed for both the state and its people. This governmentality has evolved according to Foucault because it saw the limits of a ‘police state’; one in my mind that can be likened to Orwell’s ‘Big Brother’ in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1949), which sought to control all aspects of its citizens. However, Foucault’s notion outlines a complex concept of a socialised citizen who is made responsible for their own conduct within perceived parameters of ‘freedom’, via a notion of internalised *norms* and *directions* that monitor and control people’s behaviour; the notion of ‘conduct of conduct’ (Barry et al., 1996). It is here that the notion of social construction becomes vital as these governmental understandings such as *freedom* and *norms* are socially constructed.

Given this outlook on state governance with its multiple techniques and structures to influence our constructions, I view neoliberalism not as a static way of thinking but as a point along a continuum of thought, with classical liberalism at one end and welfare liberalism at the other. I see this struggle along the continuum as a battle of the constructs; a modern battlefield where the words of politicians influence our lived

experiences as they attempt to reshape our thinking; to construct a socialised citizen ready for a reduced state necessary to meet the state's needs in a globalised, capitalist economic context.

The reason neoliberalism is so important to my research is because it is a socio-political paradigm different to the one prior to the mid 1970s. This new way of thinking seeks to move its position along the liberalism continuum further from the welfare liberalism of post-war Britain towards classical liberalism. As my research concerns education, formerly seen as a combatant in the fight against 'ignorance', one of the five 'Evil Giants' identified in the Beveridge Report of 1946, this shift towards classical liberalism affects my thinking, my participants' thinking and other educational research.

There are those who dismiss neoliberalism, suggesting that 'there is no such thing' (Barnett, 2005) and others who suggest that it is a 'necessary illusion' (Castree, 2006). Hoffman & Graham (2006) argue that neoliberalism has not become the global hegemony that some suggest and as such, researchers should focus on the local and so study neoliberalism as it is situated only. Whilst this research certainly focuses on the local, I consider that to ignore the neoliberal backdrop to our welfare policies would be to misunderstand the ways of thinking surrounding education. Harvey (2006, page 4) stated that it had "swept across the world like a vast tidal wave of institutional reform and discursive adjustment" whilst Bourdieu (1998, page 2) said it was more like "continental drift". I would agree with Harvey in that it has caused institutional reform and changed the discursive agenda but not in such a blatant way as 'sweeping like a tidal wave', which suggests an obvious and apparent sudden change. For me, neoliberalism has taken on the slow, unseen pace of change suggested by Bourdieu, but is more of a continental creep, insipid because its language often masks its intention. Take, for example, the word *individual* compared to the word *collective*. For me, the word *collective* is the more powerful word because it conjures up notions of joining forces, teamwork and togetherness. However, for many, the word *individual* is the more powerful as it conjures up notions of freedom, choice and rights. The former word, 'collective', is associated with the former world view or paradigm associated with welfare liberalism, the later word '*individual*' is associated with neoliberalism. Both have been constructed to take on these deeply entrenched political notions.

I used the term ‘paradigm’ above to describe a social-political way of thinking. My understanding of a paradigm is that all members of a community have a set of fundamental theoretical assumptions and that problems can be solved using these assumptions. Most writers consider the communities to be of a scientific nature in a similar vein as Kuhn (1963), but I see no issue with the communities belonging to a political community. This is especially the case as the definition of a paradigm includes a set of examples of how that community thinks a set of problems can be resolved. The problems in this case are the globalised economy reducing the wealth of certain *western* states. As such, a political community has changed its paradigm from a welfare liberal stance towards a neoliberal stance, and so a paradigm shift has taken place. As Kuhn (1963) describes, an entire outlook has shifted, in this case the outlook of a social democratic welfare liberalism supported by a bureaucracy of institutional, professional authorities to neoliberalism supported by marketised institutions. However, I do accept that Kuhn’s notion of a paradigm shift involves the paradigms being incommensurate with one another (Okasha, 2002) and this is not the case here; for that to happen, the shift would involve something different from liberalism and capitalism.

A final element of this discussion helps contextualise Foucault’s thinking as essentially pre-neoliberal in that he saw governmentality as the rationale by which to regulate and shape the ‘free’ individual to such an extent that individuals govern their own conduct. This was done in a so-called ‘government at arm’s length’ (Foucault, 1991) way, where the spaces of economic and civil activity were delegated to bureaucratised professional authorities and it was seen by Foucault that these independent bodies instigated programmes, strategies and regimes to maintain the wellbeing of society. In England’s case, it was these professional bodies which maintained our welfare society. However, neoliberalism’s use of new managerialism to industrialise the welfare state in preparation for privatisation and the consequent shrinkage of the state moves governmentality away from the notion of Foucault’s ‘conduct of conduct’ towards conduct via performativity, notions which remind me of Lyotard.

For the reasons stated above, I suggest that this is a weak form of governance, not self-policing but back to the old notion of state policing via enforcement. In the case of education there are ‘low trust’ chains (Clarke et al., 2000) of performance within a formal hierarchy. It is these chains which enforce conduct, chains based upon supposedly quantifiable criteria such as learning. And it is here, as we shall see, where

my participants articulate the most frustration and resentment. Furthermore, 'conduct of conduct' can be seen as beneficial to society because it is socially constructed and therefore democratic at heart. People opt in (voluntarily or involuntarily), whereas neoliberalism forces an 'opt in', not because people want to, but because they fear poverty, performativity or the need for human capital. Therefore this is an 'opt in' based on the socially constructed notion of fear of globalisation, not a socially constructed notion of a better society.

Finally, with a reduced state would Foucault have felt more at ease? I don't think so, because although neoliberalism proposes a reduced nation state at the behest of a global economic state, the market state (Bobbitt, 2003), which functions as a boundaryless behemoth state demanding human capital for its fuel, human capital that will require far more conformity and therefore require far more performativity on a global basis. As such, I believe that Foucault's notion of governmentality is due for a new appraisal, one which considers the new managerialisation agenda and the small state government, existing only to support market forces.

I began this section by outlining the notion of social constructionism, which is used throughout this work to highlight aspects of neoliberalism and how this has been used to change the political landscape. I have given a brief historical outline of neoliberal thinking and how some political actors have played their parts in re-constructing the political landscape, in part by their use of language. Furthermore, this language change forms a political paradigm shift to the point where neoliberalism is now hegemonic and therefore highlights how an interpretative research philosophy must demonstrate an understanding of this hegemony in order to understand and interpret the words of the participants. I have then gone on to discuss how Foucault's notion of governmentality may now need a more up to date appraisal as the bureaucratic bodies designed to govern at arm's length are now managerialised in readiness for a reductionist state and so now govern under a magnifying glass of low trust chains monitoring performance.



## Chapter 2 – Reviewing the Literature

### Introduction

In this chapter I will follow on from the discussion regarding my philosophical positioning by paying particular attention to the role of the political philosophy of neoliberalism and how this has impacted on the field of education in England to date. Following this, I felt it necessary to consider the notions of *choice* and how we choose within this system, plus how this has impacted on pupils, teachers and schools. After these sections I discuss the nature of the basis of our choices in terms of human capital theory, alongside its underpinnings. This therefore leads me to consider the quantitative nature of schools' *outputs*.

Within this neoliberal hegemony, I go on to discuss the teacher within the melee of these notions and subsequent change, and in doing so consider the role of teachers within their communities of practice. With this outlook on change, I then consider how teachers have attempted to adapt and consider whether their adaptations have involved a training model or a learning model to meet the new demands. As such, I am led to consider the nature of teachers' changed practice and begin to briefly enquire as to whether the new practice is professional or technical.

### 2.1 Neoliberalism: The politics of education

Given the neoliberal hegemony described above, how has this impacted on the world of education? This is the question I shall be answering in the next section. I will outline a brief history of the changing role of schools from post-war notions of meritocracy and social control to more recent neoliberal and neo-conservative ideas, which form the current political mantra on education. I then go on to outline the importance of 'choice' in our educational system and how this notion led to the desire for a new way of examining schools, giving rise to a new vocabulary.

For me, the political events described above had an obvious impact on the world of education. The social cohesion found in the UK brought about by the hardships of war enabled political reform and a foundation of the welfare state. The Education Act of 1944 established a citizen's right to a free education, one where they were allocated a place in a local school, where they learned from teachers who used their own or

amended curricula and were judged mostly via teacher assessment. It was understood that schools performed two essential roles: Firstly an economic role, in that they taught the skills necessary for work such as the so called 3R's. Secondly, they performed a selective role, sieving out the various perceived intellects loosely based on notions of equal opportunity and meritocracy and based on a belief that this intelligence was innate and associated with genetics. These notions permeate our system to this day. Furthermore, schools played, and continue to play, a part in the socialisation of citizens in that they teach the norms and values of our society, and thus are a form of social control via obedience to rules of attendance and punctuality amongst many others. They also perform a political role in that they teach how to be a citizen within our wider culture, including some notions of democracy.

However, new notions have also established themselves into today's educational world; notions such as choice, accountability and market forces. The new powerful force of neoliberalism, as described above, crept out of an economic way of thinking into a new welfare way of thinking in that neoliberal market forces would be the solutions to certain constructed educational problems. This new powerful force was driven by both an adherence to neoliberal free market notions of capital and a desire to go back to the perceived common culture, a previous educational utopia congealed in the mindset of neo-conservatives, a notion I would describe as 'Ladybird Book Britain'. This alignment of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism positioned itself as a functionary for the new middle class, who readily accepted notions of choice and measurement on the basis that they would make good choices and their children would be measured in preparedness for success, but that schools would also deliver romanticised notions of schooling (Apple, 2001).

This paradigm shift from post-war notions of welfare, collectivism, and social justice to neoliberal post-welfare policies placed the individual at the centre of decision making via notions of choice. Consequently, notions of inequality become concerned with the individual's inadequacy, so unlike post-war welfare notions, this inequality will not be reduced by further social welfare but by an expectation of the individual to strive to reduce that inequality. As such, if education were to become a route out of inequality, it followed that the individual must be able to choose the route and so choice became a central tenant of our educational system (Robertson, 2000). Once choice is established as a concept, a whole raft of other notions must follow and once choice is established,

then the state must be seen to fund that choice, such that the individual becomes the chooser. Furthermore, from the perspective of the school, pupils and parents become consumers and once consumers exist then so does the notion of profit and loss.

It is worth noting here that in order for governments to establish the environments that would encourage these market forces, they also had to engage with people, in that they had to consider neoliberal notions of agency (Gershon, 2011). For this reason, teachers became particularly vulnerable because they play such an essential role in producing society's knowledge (Robertson, 1996). Furthermore, it was considered by neoliberal exponents that market forces would vastly improve on what were perceived as cumbersome and costly administrative and bureaucratic structures in schools and so it was perceived that market forces would streamline those structures and reduce costs; become *efficient*, a notion I will return to later. As such, neoliberals saw the market as both a democratic force via notions of individualism and choice and as efficient via notions of bureaucratic cost cutting to ensure a profit. Notice here how new words begin to build the neoliberal hegemony, words such as 'efficient' soon gave rise to the notion of 'effective' in that schools 'inputs' and 'outputs' or *standards* align with the financial vocabulary. Remember McKnight's words from 1977, his prophecy is now a reality.

The legitimacy of neoliberalism also draws strength from the way it appoints blame, in that it frames education and therefore schools and teachers as being the cause of various problems from social unrest to economic failure, which is a neat trick politically because it 'exports' the blame away from politicians and directly towards institutions (Apple, 2001). As such, neoliberal ideology legitimises itself via notions of democracy based on the choice of the individual, the efficiency of market forces driving costs down while driving standards up, and by appearing to deal with apparently failing institutions. This apparent neoliberal panacea is based on two notions as mentioned above, neoliberal functionalism based on notions of human capital theory and neo-conservative nostalgia. The former is based on notions of human capital fit for the globalised market. The latter is based on a romanticised notion of what schools delivered in terms of a 'traditional' curriculum and in terms of a 'traditional' learning environment whereby pupils sit in rows, are obedient and the teacher is the fountain of all knowledge, all of which emphasise authority, discipline, hierarchical notions of organisational structures, etc. via its hidden curriculum.

For these reasons, the National Curriculum was imposed on schools via the 1988 Education Act and set out how 70% of pupil time was to be spent in all state schools. It was so prescriptive that it outlined in primary schools the 10 subject areas with specific times for each subject (Hursh, 2005). This neo-conservative interference with the curriculum has continued, such as when former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, insisted on 64 pieces of historical knowledge being woven into the KS3 curriculum in all state secondary schools – historical knowledge that he considered all pupils should know to be able to appreciate Britain’s importance in the world historically, giving them a sense of what it is to be ‘British’. These were withdrawn after an outcry from historians and Gove was replaced, but not before all teachers of history had spent many hours preparing for yet another curriculum invasion.

## 2.2 Choice: The new structure

Choice in English schools was created by changing the enrolment procedures from one where pupils were allocated places in a local school to one of open enrolment, whereby pupils via their parents or carers could apply to attend other schools. This is a central tenant of market forces and the rationale was that parental choice, based on primitive notions of social Darwinism, would lead to good schools growing and therefore expanding that *goodness* to more *clients*, whilst poor schools would contract and eventually die, thereby reducing their ability to inflict their *badness* on pupils. The basis for this is competition. Schools compete to win pupils, via parental choice, whereby the pupils are the prizes as they are allocated funds, and with more funds, schools can expand to offer that education to more. However, in order to be perceived as being *good* a school has to either have ‘able’ pupils or be able to attract ‘able’ pupils. This form of educational *natural selection* includes notions of eugenics and evolution theory.

Unfortunately, choice is not equitable as it exists for some more than others. Gewirtz (2002) showed how schools with mainly white middle class parents based on a former prescribed catchment area are advantaged over those schools geographically placed in areas where there is housing offered to refugee or homeless families. The situation is further exacerbated when children who are not seen as coping in the white middle class school are then excluded and sent to the schools who have to welcome any pupil because of the price on that pupil’s head. As such, the wealthy schools get wealthier and the poorer schools get poorer. Or at least they would if there was a real choice. Instead it is rather a myth, as schools are limited by space and the buildings they have, and so

cannot expand to meet the demand resulting in oversubscription and widespread parental disappointment. So schools now spend significant amounts of money on advertising, a notion associated with market forces but not educating children. For example, one school in Newcastle has funded large posters to be displayed throughout the city on the back of buses to attract more pupils. Note how the advertisement attempts to convey neo-conservative nostalgic notions.



However, this is unlikely to have much impact other than making those already attending the school have a sense of pride because middle class parents have equipped themselves with a new form of social capital; one in which they know how to ‘work the system’ (Ball et al., 1994). They have equipped themselves via their social, economic and cultural capital so they can decode and manipulate systems of choice such that they have an unseen yet “powerful store house of resources” with which they get their children into the best schools (Apple, 2001). Not only do the middle class advantage themselves, but the ways of working and the procedures of *good* schools exclude those without that storehouse, namely the working class. Therefore choice does not exist for all and so is no choice. Whilst I would not argue that what existed before was a great advocate of meritocracy, it does seem that what we have now, via adulterated notions of choice, further disrupts those notions of meritocracy.

### 2.3 How do we choose?

Parents are supposed to choose on the basis of performance, so rather like choosing a car or a washing machine, we gather performance data on speed, efficiency etc., but with schools, we choose on the basis of test data which is published in league tables. However, a further layer of performativity has been added partly due to the complexity

of the comparative data such that Ofsted judges schools' performance and pronounces its own judgement. This information is the currency both for competition between schools and the currency which enables parental choice (Broadfoot, 2001, in Hagen, 2006).

Performativity requires teachers, as practitioners, to organise their work so that they respond to various targets (Ball, 2003), accountability (Mahony and Hextall, 2000), Ofsted judgements (Broadfoot, 2001) or other indicators. It is this notion of performativity that is the basic mechanism for neoliberal marketisation and therefore requires standardisation not only of the curriculum because it is tested, but also of various other values and behaviours. Thus, the performativity driven by standardisation has driven out the autonomy of the education world to choose a curriculum suitable for an individual locality, as well as standardising performativity regimes for teachers. Here it is worth noting what Biesta (2009) calls *normative validity*, in that we do not measure what we value, we just measure what is easily measured and therefore only value what we can easily measure. For me, this is the perfect solution for a manufacturing model of inputs and outputs in a welfare context, where welfare constructs necessitate qualitative data, but this has been replaced by quantitative data because it fits better with the marketised model. An example of this can be found in the way *speaking and listening* judgements have been rejected because they are teacher-assessed despite this method offering more useful feedback to pupils (Cox, 2013). Here, we can see that it is the political agenda which drives change, not the best interests of the pupils. The globalised nature of performance is an issue I will return to later, however, it is worth noting here that this globalisation agenda legitimises yet further control of schools and teachers and further reduces autonomy.

The notion of standardised performance found in schools has required new forms of bureaucratic structures and so a new form of managerialisation has been developed. These managerialised bureaucratic structures are based on quantifying performance, which they do by creating tiered hierarchies of performance data gathering, measuring and subsequent analysis, all of which absorb resources. As such, resources are directed away from the role of schools in that they are directed away from educating pupils and towards monitoring and evaluating staff performance. Ironically neoliberal ideology, based on free market choice, encourages diversity in that current policy 'frees' schools from local authority control, however, the standardised performance measures directed

nationally via national standards and a centrally organised and standardised Ofsted inspection regime creates sameness not diversity. Moreover, this neoliberal marketisation results in the *qualification* of children via *learnification* and where the socialisation of our children via the *subjectification* (Biesta, 2009) function leads to homogenous yearly batches of human capital.

## 2.4 Human Capital Theory: the ‘outputs’

Human Capital Theory (HCT) links a person’s stock of knowledge or personal traits that will align with their productivity. It enables others to view schools as part of the human capital investment. HCT is an important notion of labour economics, which demonstrates how the marketable skills of people can be seen as a form of capital with which these people can make a variety of investments, such as in training, schooling, attitudes to work, etc. A few different perspectives on HCT exist and are worth exploring here. Firstly, the Becker view, which states that human capital is directly involved in production and so an increase in human capital will result in an increase in productivity. Secondly, the Schultz/Nelson-Phelps (1961) view, which states that human capital should be seen as an individual’s ability to adapt and will therefore cope better under the constantly shifting sands of the global market and can be seen in our schools in such work as Guy Claxton’s *5 R’s* (2002) where one of the R’s is resilience. Finally, the Bowles-Gintis (1975) view, which states that human capital is an individual’s ability to function within an organisation, in that, it is how a person obeys orders and can adapt to hierarchical structures. In this model a notion of schools is one which instils the ‘correct’ approach to a worker’s life.

### 2.4.1 The Politics of HCT

While Thatcherism drove the notion of market forces as well as notions of competition into the education system, it was the New Labour government which embraced the ideas of a global market and developed a new understanding that individuals had an obligation to work. This move from the welfare state towards a market state was driven by authors such as Philip Bobbitt (2002), who suggested that for a single state to be able to compete successfully in a global market and so succeed economically, the state needed to reduce governmental influence and privatise state activities. This would cut or loosen the strings of the state, making the local employment market more responsive to global markets. This was demonstrated in Bobbitt’s ‘virtuous circle’ which begins with privatisation of public services which results in capital gains, which lowers the deficit,

which lowers inflation, which attracts capital, lowering borrowing costs which lowers the deficit and so on, eventually leading to more Research and Development, better productivity and more jobs. However, the circle begins again with more privatisation and so appears flawed as eventually a government will run out of things to privatise.

The consequence of this way of thinking was the de-personalisation of people as human beings into a form of currency. That is why there was a general understanding that, given the needs of a global capitalist economy, strongly bolstered by the collapse of communism, and that these needs influenced local and national economies, ‘assignment’ education would have a major role in improving national economies. Assignment education being the notion where, via HCT, workers would act in new and productive ways and so investment in education was to invest in the economy. A consequence of this way of thinking was a political splitting of the national picture as in 1999 the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament took responsibility for education and training, resulting in these ‘market reforms’ being applied mostly in England.

In 1996 the DfEE had begun to highlight this change in thinking: “Investment in learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the equivalent of investment in the machinery and technical innovation that was essential to the first industrial revolution. Then it was capital, now it is human capital” (DfEE 1996). In May 1997, the new Labour government published a Green Paper called *The Learning Age: A renaissance for a new Britain* (1997). The then education secretary David Blunkett said:

“Learning is the key to prosperity – for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole. Investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty first century.”

This clearly shows no change in the education outlook from the previous Conservative government.

However, against a backdrop of mounting evidence that England was apparently falling behind other countries (DfES/DTi, 2003) in terms of educational and vocational qualifications, it is little wonder that there was a rush towards performativity, despite a lack of evidence to link the performance of schools with national economic competitiveness (Robinson 1997, 1999). So this is where we are now, education is not about preparation for life in a democratic society or for the love of learning and natural



inquisitiveness, but about regarding the young as human capital and being prepared for work in a global economy (Tomlinson, 2005).

Also, teachers and the teaching profession were considered to be out of kilter with the notion that teachers, as reflexive practitioners who joined theory and practice to enhance the learning of their students/pupils, were simply concerned with the production of work prepared commodities. As such, the Victorian model of teacher training, one where they reproduce technical operations and transmitted subject knowledge was reintroduced without the professional autonomy to sustain a love of learning in their pupils. This was done via the abolition of various bodies such as the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (1985) and the Schools Council (1982) amongst others, and was further bolstered by the introduction of new bodies responsible for the criteria of all teacher training courses and removing that responsibility from institutions of Higher Education such as the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher education (1984).

Furthermore, those teachers already trained and in school encountered new modes of management imposed by a dominant discourse of private business via notions of human capital theory, as discussed earlier. The new models of resource management led to teachers' pay and conditions being linked to performance in the form of an appraisal system. This further eroded the notion of teacher autonomy as the teachers were subjected to pre-ordained performance and competency procedures based on notions of learning, thus complying with the notion of human capital.

A system was outlined to monitor school standards nationally in the DES *assessment of performance* unit in 1974, but it focused on curriculum issues rather than individual performance. It wasn't until 1984 that the government published a white paper called *Teaching Quality* in which it stated that 'formal assessment of teacher performance is necessary'. A year later in 1985, the DES published *Quality Schools: Evaluation and Appraisal*, which outlined a formal and systematic process of teacher appraisal. Appraisal has increasingly moved along a continuum where appraisal is solely for professional development at one end and appraisal is solely for accountability at the other (Middlewood, 2002, Chapter 8 in *Principles and Practice in Education*, 2002). Other reports such as 'the new professionalism agenda' set out by the School Teachers Review Body, 2005 and The Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations, 2006 clearly show this change in emphasis. An example of this

can be found in the current National Standards for head teachers, where out of 42 actions under six headings, only three are about developing the head teacher as an individual; the rest concern accountability measures.

### **2.5 Educational research: neoliberal rationale requires quantifiable measures**

The paradigm shift from a welfare society to a post-welfare society, where the marketisation of society and globalisation of capitalism, necessitating market states rather than national states, impacted on educational research. With a backdrop of ‘transparent accountability’ in the public services, it was David Hargreaves (2001) who criticised educational research in that it was based on an enlightenment model which looked at different kinds of knowledge and at creating the intellectual conditions for progress, and that it was neither evidence-based nor useful to practitioners. Furthermore, Hargreaves argued that this model had failed to produce a worthwhile bank of resources or collective wisdom.

This positivistic, quantitative approach to educational research, one based on problem solving (the engineering model), aligned with government policy. This alignment with policy remained largely associated with resource management and organisational systems and structures, and kept clear of teachers’ professional practice until 1998. At this point, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, links government policy with professional practice through the *Strategy for the Promotion of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Secondary Schools*, supported by a community of educational researchers, such as Hargreaves (1996) who stated that “ministers now recognise that standards of teaching and learning are unlikely to be raised by policy action that never penetrates the classroom” (Fielding, 2001, page 204). I believe that it is at this point that a formerly held view of teacher autonomy was lost.

However, I consider that the governmental policy that appeared to concur with Hargreaves has often missed the detail in his arguments. In his paper *A Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement* (2001, page 1), Hargreaves appears to set out a direct link between Human Capital Theory and the purpose of schools. His abstract begins “A new theory of school effectiveness and improvements is outlined, based on the master concepts of intellectual capital, social capital and leverage, linked with the conventional concept of institutional outputs”. Yet within the paper he considers an outcome of school improvement to include “cognitive and moral, defined here in an

essentially Aristotelian way” in that “the purpose of education is to initiate the young into these excellences, through which they acquire the disposition to make sound intellectual and moral judgements and choices” (page 7). Furthermore, he considered that the Green Paper, *The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain* “would contribute to social cohesion and foster a sense of belonging, responsibility and identity in communities”, something HCT would never claim to do.

In this section, I have briefly outlined what I consider to be important historical changes in how we perceive education. I have outlined the importance of choice and its associated performativity data, I have discussed notions of human capital and how this came to dominate educational thinking and I have discussed how both notions contribute to the decline in autonomy of teachers. Despite being critical of educational research, I now consider in-depth the theoretical perspective of Wenger’s community of practice on teachers.

## **2.6 Communities of Practice – Teachers Isolated or Integrated?**

I have outlined the political philosophy underpinning policy changes within the arena of education in that those policies are driven by a neoliberal ideology. This has created competitive markets within and between schools, with much change aligned to neoliberal functionalism running parallel to the contradictory notions of a neo-conservative curriculum. Within this complex and complicated world, I consider that using a conceptual framework will help focus on issues in our schools, so I will look at Wenger’s notion of a community of practice and what this has to say about schools as organisations, as well as what the new political underpinnings may also bring about.

Furthermore, despite there being no current need for a teacher to re-accredit their teaching qualification, there is still a need for teachers to develop and continually update their knowledge and skills, especially in the light of all the change outlined above. In this section, I will critically explore institutional learning via Wenger’s (1989) notion of a community of practice, as it is this conceptual framework that I will use to structure my study. This focuses on how teachers cope with the neoliberal changes imposed on them and their organisations via leadership decisions and how they support the notion of learning within a community of practice.

Wenger considers communities of practice to be vital in the development of organisations, despite the complex nature of those communities. I will discuss the

importance of the role of school leadership in terms of the maintenance of communities of practice, despite perceived organisational fear of the power of these communities. Hence, I will look at how communities of practice can function in schools and contribute or otherwise to school development. Finally, I will consider criticisms of the conceptual framework of communities of practice.

The study of communities of practice has become important to organisations as it is a way of conceptualising institutional learning, and all organisations seek learning as a way of growing and improving. As such, this section will discuss the nature of adult learning, as it includes an outlook regarding lifelong learning as vital both to how institutions can cope with change as well as how individuals cope. Consequently this enables both to benefit, so institutional learning cannot be seen as a single element but as a dual phenomenon; one of both personal learning, that in turn, builds the capacity for organisational learning (Stoll et al., 2012).

Wenger (1989) notes that institutional systems and structures are often at odds with the reality of work and it is within a community of practice that collective construction of local practice takes place, making the demands of the job achievable. It is within these communities of practice that the real work occurs (Wenger, 1989); where formal learning rests on what is learnt informally and where the official demands of the job meet the everyday practice of workers. Yet it is within this practice that the job gets done and not within the processes or policies of the institution. Therefore, if school systems and structures do not accommodate communities of practice, then the quality of teachers' learning and their ability to cope with change will be jeopardised. Furthermore, an institution can create a whole repertoire of artefacts such as rules, contracts etc., but it is within the community of practice that teachers decide if they are useful or can be ignored. That is why this can be a powerful force for change or stagnation; if teachers do not appreciate the need for systems and structures imposed on them, they may be ignored and the reason for the imposition will not be achieved. Despite the potential benefits, communities of practice have modest demands, such as space and occasions to meet, things to do collaboratively and a voice within the organisation with which to take initiatives. In order to achieve engagement and alignment with organisational goals, communities of practice cannot be isolated, nor can the individuals within the community. Furthermore, the work of a teacher needs to be seen in terms of the school acting as a work place society within which each teacher is organised and contributes to

the work process by their individual knowledge, their craft and ability to meet the aims of their organisation (Jarvis, 2004).

As such, a community of practice can be defined as social participation where learning takes place via a negotiation of meaning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This negotiation takes place while teachers undertake practice within a community and as they learn, their identity changes. However, that learning is not confined to specific events or organised structures, but occurs as a result of routine collective activities (Lave, 2009, in Illeris, 2009). In more specific terms, outlined by Carr and Kemmis (1986), a teacher who plans, observes results systematically, reflects critically then discusses this with others, creates a “critical community of enquiry”, which in turn reconstructs practice. This appears to leave a gap between organised training events designed to enhance the skills of teachers or improve their knowledge because, according to the theory of communities of practice, this is not where the real learning takes place, but rather back in the staffroom or by the coffee machine. However, if a school appreciates this, then the training events can be considered a catalyst, one which will spark future engagement within the community of practice.

Organisations need to engage learners, resource them and motivate them so they see themselves involved in actions, discussions and reflections. It is in this structure that organisations engineer, then re-engineer, their organisational processes. As it is within this participation that change evolves, it is essential that participants have a voice and that communities of practice contribute and sense that the contribution is valued. It is this participation, the doing, talking (said and un-said), thinking, and feeling that conflicts can become harmonious and competition becomes co-operation. This participation shapes both the individual via identity and the organisation via contributing to its collective knowledge. For example, the teacher who shares his/her expertise on peer assessment will gain personally by engagement in adult education and the institution will gain by extending its knowledge of peer assessment to other teachers.

Wenger (1989) highlights the importance of participation resulting from negotiation of new ways of doing things, so creating opportunities for different communities of practice to talk can be a key to success. For example, PE staff working with English to support a literacy strategy ensuring consistency in speaking levels at Key Stage 3. However, Wenger also considers diversity to be important, as homogeneity can lead to

sameness whilst diversity can lead to challenge. Wenger concedes that communities of practice can be influenced, manipulated and even duped or exploited. Likewise participants within a community of practice can be inspired, enlightened and empowered. This is where power mediates within a community of practice and why leadership needs to constantly engage with communities of practice. It is where Wenger describes participation and reification as tools to leverage communities of practice to shape the future. However, because communities of practice are concerned with learning and learning with identity, it is workers who choose to engage and can choose to become peripheral to the enterprise. Furthermore, because Wenger sees identity firmly located within communities of practice, it is the individual who decides what shapes their individual identities within a social landscape. It is the individual who chooses what they care about and what they neglect, which connections to make and which to avoid. It is the individual who chooses their own learning trajectory.

It is because communities of practice are socially and culturally constructed and influenced by context that they appear to offer ideal learning opportunities (Boud and Miller, 1996). However, it is also a key feature of learning to involve reflection, giving an opportunity to validate, transform and give personal and social meaning to new knowledge (Weil and McGill, 1989). The real learning will not take place during a training day or twilight continual professional development session, but during the days and weeks afterwards, when the topics are discussed further within the community of practice. That is if they have relevance to the community, otherwise they can be ignored.

The benefits of communities of practice include supporting a communal memory, helping newcomers and resolving institutionally generated conflicts amongst others (Wenger, 1989). Moreover, communities of practice are vital to organisations because they offer a route to institutional learning which helps them to know what they know and so become increasingly effective. Hence, this study will explore school communities of practice to discover how robustly schools embrace the culture of communities of practice and so reap the benefits outlined above.

Alternatively, communities of practice can be seen by some to bring about negative influences on a workforce as the shaping of practice by a community of practice is not determined by an outside mandate or leader, but via a negotiation of parties within that community of practice. And whilst the resources given to communities of practice to

help them contribute to organisational goals, it may be these resources that result in things the organisation does not want. It is essentially because communities of practice are defined by that practice that they are informal and develop in organic ways. Therefore they can be seen as difficult to control and may not be congruent with institutional structures or affiliations, for example a homework policy that does not balance the need for pupils to follow up classroom learning with the time needed for teachers to mark the work may result in teachers not giving out the homework or giving meaningless tasks to pupils. Moreover, if communities of practice develop entrenched relationships, they can block broader encounters and therefore limit their own learning. This may be an issue of the complexity of communities of practice but it may also be due to communities of practice concerning the participant's identity and not necessarily about institutional learning. Again, this is an area my research will explore. As Printy (2008) proposed, teachers' communities only emerge once they feel included in work which they deem important.

Whilst researching this area, I acknowledge the complexity inherent to communities of practice and that this can be problematic as the benefits can be perceived as ethereal and intangible, so linking *impact* to communities of practice can be difficult. However, this is why the development of communities of practice must be seen as a strategic decision and not a tactical one, highlighting the importance of communities of practice being understood as a concept by leadership teams within our schools.

Furthermore, whilst Wenger acknowledges that individuals have multiple membership of communities of practice and that those communities of practice create their own accountability, it is the role of leadership via visioning, inspiring etc., to align accountability across all communities of practice. Of Wenger's three modes of belonging (engagement, imagination and alignment), it is the third part, alignment, that resonates as a vitally important part of leadership. The work of alignment is the role of leadership, in that leaders have to negotiate different perspectives and find common ground. They should inspire and unite via defining visions and aspirations whilst being relaxed about giving communities of practice freedom to negotiate and so freedom to learn. Wenger also emphasises how joint enterprises give rise to relational accountability within a community of practice such as a team or department, again necessitating the team leader to align the team's accountability with those of the organisation. Coburn (2001) suggests that it is the principal (head teacher) that sets the

boundaries for and influences the direction of teacher's conversations in their communities of practice. However, Wenger reminds us that an overbearing institutional pressure of accountability leads to a "state of locked-in congruence" (Wenger, 1989, page 214), so everyone in the community of practice says the same things and thinks the same way, slowing down learning and leading to practices becoming stale.

Moreover, because learning is a social practice, we create our common sense communally. As such, if leadership imposes top-down common sense that is incongruent to the communities of practice, then the communities can choose to ignore it and maintain their own common sense and their own associated accountability. I believe Wenger acknowledges the importance of leadership whilst not using the term directly by noting that behind the hierarchy of leadership within an organisation, there exists the notion of politics of participation and reification. Both appear to offer opportunities to destroy or cultivate communities of practice and include such things as charisma, nepotism, trust, discrimination [participation] and policies, contracts, plans [reification]. These are key areas of focus for my research. As illustrated above, Wenger's view of looking at an organisation not as an umbrella with formal structures above and the informal practice below, but rather as a "constellation" (Wenger, 1989, page 127) of communities of practice with all the associated interconnectivity, appears an essential outlook for all leaders within our organisations.

To embark on a route of institutional change via the development of a community of practice, involves choices for schools which can be difficult, especially when schools are under constant supervision, with success being demanded quickly by outside agencies such as Ofsted, who measure success not by internal arrangements to build capacity for long term improvement, but by pupil data. This can negatively affect management decisions by focussing on tactical short term goals rather than sustained goals such as investing in communities of practice. Unfortunately, some research has found that when schools have attempted to develop their communities of practice, those involved were unable to establish the practice required for it to flourish (Dooner et al., 2008).

Despite the complexity, it is clear that if nothing changes then nothing is learnt, or at least the organisation does not learn as communities of practice are a collective activity engaged in meaning making (Lave, 2009). Also, individuals have to engage with a



community of practice to reap the benefits both individually and collectively, plus organisations need to contribute to the sustenance of communities of practice by maintaining their interconnectedness and because this is such a complex notion, institutions may be less inclined to support them - or even fear their power. Indeed, many organisations demand maximum prescription as a route to enhanced efficiency, whilst the concept of a community of practice demands minimum prescription (Wenger, 1989).

Another issue for leaders considering communities of practice is that they do not offer formal education which can be institutionalised, delivered chronologically or within a system or structure. Communities of practice offer opportunities for informal education which take place within the workplace community and can be seen as non-formal education (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974), which is everyday learning and which is self-directed. This type of learning can be divided into intended learning, something the learner wishes to know to meet competencies described within the community of practice or incidental learning, where the learner simply picks up ways of doing things or nuggets of information from other work colleagues.

Academic researchers such as Stoll (2007) have suggested that schools, even large secondary schools, are now too small and isolated to provide learning support and opportunities for their staff. This appears to be a compelling argument to start school networks or communities of practice which cross borders. Furthermore, it continues to be the case that within school variation is greater than between school variation (Muijs, 2004). Consequently, there is a compelling argument to foster communities of practice, both within our organisations as well as between them.

Some evidence that networking has a positive impact on pupil achievement comes from the systematic review conducted by Shaneyfelt et al. (2006). However, Sammons et al. (2007) discussed the idea of a 'cocktail' of school improvement practices, which contribute collectively to pupil outcomes. It is for these reasons that this thesis has a qualitative methodology, as quantitative data from pupil outcomes can be difficult to account for. This was highlighted by Hattie (2012), whose meta-analysis on research impacting on student learning concluded that any intervention can claim to work, but that some interventions are more effective than others.

There are some criticisms of the concept of communities of practice. For example, how the social affiliations of the workers can impact on their actions and their learning. These affiliations can range from being a member of a trade union or professional body, something linked to their work role or something beyond the workplace such as being in different family circumstances, pregnancy or going through a divorce.

Another criticism of communities of practice is that they appear to value the collective and give less credence to the individual (Hodkinson et al., 2004). But a more powerful criticism is that communities of practice support homophily (Brass, 1985), where individuals choose to work with those similar to themselves, thereby reinforcing previously learnt knowledge, not creating and sharing new knowledge. Again, this is something I must remain aware of during my investigations, but I do not feel the potential limitations of using Wenger's conceptual framework for studying learning within an organisation are powerful enough to change my view on the importance of using such a framework.

In this section, I have discussed Wenger's concept of communities of practice and how these can be seen as being vital, yet complex, in the development of organisations such as schools. I have also considered how communities of practice offer opportunities for change but can be feared as they acknowledge a reduction in hierarchical power. As such, communities of practice are considered important to schools but they can be neglected due to the current complexity found within our schools, highlighting the need for this research. I have briefly considered criticisms of this theoretical framework and decided that the benefits of using Wenger's concept easily outweigh those criticisms, so I will use this as a main lens through which to interpret my participants' descriptions of their lived experiences.

## **2.7 The nature of the new knowledge: Training or Learning?**

Following on from the above section looking at the complexity of organisational development via communities of practice, I will now focus on the nature of learning offered by the school. For this reason, the next task is to explore to what extent schools support learning, especially in terms of the learner's voice and choice in that learning, notions expressly focused on by Wenger as being vital to his concept. Furthermore, I will consider neoliberal managerialisation on teachers such that a new culture has

emerged, one aligned to marketisation and institutional goals, and not necessarily on individual learning needs.

In traditional societies, learning and work were intertwined; hunting and fishing needed specific techniques such as making a trap, but as society developed, learning became institutionalised via schooling and vocational training in so much as industrial capitalism divided society into thinkers and doers, often the same difference that forms class divisions, which can be traced back to Plato's *Republic*. However, today the educational establishment places high value on workplace skills and competencies, yet it has been suggested that formal education and training no longer meets these needs (Scheeres et al., 2010). Therefore, this study will focus on the nature of opportunities offered by schools to enhance teachers' ability to learn and cope with change, and consider those opportunities in terms of whether they are training or learning.

In this section, I will differentiate between 'training' and 'learning', and consider notions of learning other than those proposed by Wenger. Whilst the complexities involved are enormous, it is agreed that teachers need to continually develop to meet the changing demands of the role. Whether this development requires training or learning, both should be differentiated to match the individual's needs, to include opportunities to reflect and should motivate participation extrinsically or intrinsically. MacBeath (2012) suggests that teachers are losing or have lost their autonomy due to neoliberal managerialisation of their roles, and that this has had a negative impact on teachers.

Whilst focusing on training and learning, I will begin by making a distinction between the two as I understand it. Training involves trainers, who organise opportunities for learning to take place. Trainers develop the content and set up programmes of study. Although the trainer is concerned with learning, i.e. the content of the programme, they also play a pivotal role in the decision making process of what is to be learnt and how it will be learnt. In this process, learning may well take place during these events; however, it is recognised that much learning takes place without any connection to either the organisers or the events. Indeed, learning is about the individual empowering themselves and directing their own learning needs. Therefore, training can be seen as a product of management or as one of the tools of management and learning can be seen as a process of personal development (Van der Krogt, 1998). The concerns that schools have is that they know about the importance of individual learning and how this can link

to organisational learning, but to develop the individual implies a loss of control by the organisation. However, with training, the organisation controls the learning agenda. Therefore, one of the significant discussions in this work will be about control and the power of the decision makers setting the learning/training agenda.

Although the central pillar of this study is Wenger's notion of learning within a community of practice, it is also important to consider how others have seen learning, which will help me develop findings from the research. Some, including Wenger, have said that learning involves any permanent change in behaviour which is the result of experience (Borger and Seaborne, 1966), such as modelling. Others suggest it involves a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of practice (Hilgard and Atkinson, 1967), e.g. playing darts or even practising new teaching techniques. Both definitions follow the dualist approach to learning outlined in behaviourist theories, in that learning is the connectivity between two parts; the bodily experiences encoded by our senses and the decoding of those experiences made sense of by our minds. It is here that we can further distinguish between training and learning, where training offers exposure to the first section of dualism, while learning involves both. Other differences can be found between training and education, where education is about the acquisition of knowledge, whereas training is about the acquisition of skills (Jarvis, 2009). So, if training is about skills, then teacher training is about creating a teacher technician, whereas teacher development is about teachers' further learning, via a dualist understanding, and so could be considered professional rather than technical.

Vocational training has been valued as a method of 'pre-packing' individuals with the capacity to begin work without further learning. However, now this is no longer seen as an end in itself, as many professionals such as doctors and nurses require regular re-accreditation and in our schools, teachers also need to continually develop their professional practice. However, the question remains: is this done best by training or learning, or are both so intertwined that the question is irrelevant? Despite this question, there is a compelling case for building professional development (Little, 2006), even though the complexities of development are hard to pin down.

When considering learning within an organisation, it is worth noting Dewey's notion of learning via experience in that when we learn, we experience constant interactions between individuals and our environment. This is a fundamental principle within

Wenger's learning framework and therefore central to my research. Tennant (in Illeris, 2009) makes an interesting distinction between training, which he suggests comes from above and learning, which comes from within, in that for quality learning to take place, there needs to be a move from "disciplinary power" (Tennant, 2009, page 149) or outside authoritative power to "pastoral power" (Tennant, 2009, page 152), the individual internal power. In other words, teachers' own decision-making power. In support of this, Engestrom (in Illeris, 2009) adds that if leadership gives an assignment, it is typically rejected. This also links to the point Heron (in Illeris, 2009) makes, in that training is tactical, whilst learning is strategic, acknowledging that the practical methods used in the short term to resolve an issue are top-down decisions lacking in the personal involvement of the learner, whilst strategic planning seeks to anticipate and educate before the event and is likely to involve the learner in that decision making. This point takes us back to a crucial difference between training and learning in that it involves the participant's voice. So for me, the difference is about power; a choice between the voice of the individual learner and the voice of the organisation.

While the above discussion centres on the distinctions between training and learning, another key element to consider involves the quality of training. If the training offered involves experiences, then this is also a basis for quality learning too. Likewise, if the training involves discovery and self-actuation, then it is also offers the potential for quality learning. Furthermore, if training involves the planning, implementing and monitoring of a range of activities that focus on the learning of pupils, staff, leaders and other stakeholders, then organisational improvement can be evidenced (Stoll et al., 2012). However, a fundamental of Wenger's concept of learning within a community of practice would be that the training allows for the negotiation of that meaning back in the community.

As Alheit (in Illeris, 2009) states, the nature of education and learning has changed because we no longer need to communicate a body of knowledge, values or skills, because they can be absorbed and as such, we no longer need a distinct curriculum or even good teaching and learning. The emphasis is now on the situation and context of what is to be learnt, plus the prerequisites of the learner. This means that if training is to be considered of adequate quality, it must be differentiated.

Also it may not be whether the experience can be classed as training or learning or both but whether or not it is followed by time to reflect (Boud et al., 1998) because it is within this reflection that teachers as professionals assimilate and distil the learning so that it becomes part of us and part of our practice. Furthermore, new ways of knowing, being, acting and interacting can be achieved if time is given to reflect on information, validate the information and then transform it by giving it personal and social meaning (Weil and McGill, 1989). It is this reflection and validation that links Wenger's notion of negotiated meaning, which is new learning, within the community of practice.

Existential learning suggests that learning takes place when a gap is highlighted between what we expect to perceive, based on our prior experience, and what we are actually confronted with (Kolb, 1984). This raises the question of who highlights those gaps and how a community of practice responds. Perhaps it is the role of leadership to maintain staff in the 'separation stage', where questioning begins and where our conscious learning starts. Therefore, it can be considered that good leadership exposes staff to difficult truths about what needs to be achieved, thus spotlighting the gap between our perception and reality, and linking both the organisational needs directly with the needs of the individual. However, this disjuncture could be perceived as being too wide and staff may reject it (Javis, 2010), thereby rejecting the learning opportunities. As such, perhaps it is not the quality of leadership that can be seen to create successful schools, but the ability of those organisations to create valued and valuable learning opportunities with which to build capacity for organisational change. This will be a key question flowing through the study.

All theories of learning include the element of desire. It is within this basic human emotion that the motivation to learn can be found; we desire to know. Thus, all learning, whether focused on the individual, or training, focused on the organisation, will take place if the people are motivated. However, motivation like learning has a duality. Extrinsic motivation is when we are compelled to do something or act in a certain way because of external factors such as the fear of capability proceedings. Intrinsic motivation is when people are internally motivated to do something because they think it is important or they gain pleasure from achieving something, such as seeing disadvantaged pupils gaining good grades – a form of social justice. In this case, the motivation comes from the individual perceiving something as important to them. This balance of intrinsic motivation, typified by the vocational nature of the teaching

profession and the extrinsic motivation within the teaching profession, typified by performativity measures, will be a key investigation of this study.

While there is no definitive measure of professional autonomy, there exists a perception that it regards a person's control over their work (Pearson and Hall, 1993) and as such, is often seen as a fluid concept (Hague, 2011). Although teachers' professionalism is considered a contentious subject (Berry, 2012), there is little doubt that autonomy is a key feature of it (MacBeath, 2012). After all, teachers, by the very nature of their role, constantly deal with questions from pupils and so are constantly making judgements on how to answer – so autonomy, the freedom to think and act accordingly, is central to the teacher's role (Hoyle and Wallace in Gerwartz et al., 2009). While some have suggested that teachers maintain professional autonomy because their day to day existence is not set in stone and it is only the exit points which are measured (Berry, 2012), others have said that this actually de-professionalises teachers (Evans, 2008, MacBeath, 2012) and that those neoliberal functionalist targets, set in a neoliberal market place, have eroded that autonomy. Many now see teachers' autonomy as regulated (Dale, 1982), often by leadership (Forrester, 2000). However, it is clear that currently the former notion of the 'street level bureaucrat' (Lipsky, 1980) is no longer powerful in the teaching profession.

It is pertinent to note that teachers can be considered their own worst enemy, in that teachers will follow non-statutory guidance despite being able to act in an autonomous way (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009). For me, this says more about the routes into teaching, which are a way of self-selecting people seeking compliance, in that teachers enjoyed their own schooling and so were naturally compliant. They performed in accordance with what was expected in school and at university, hence the self-selecting nature of a compliant profession, ripe for being bullied and pushed around by various governments.

However, as Little (1995) suggested, successful teachers are autonomous because of their sense of personal responsibility such that they work with a combination of vocationalism and humanism (Woods and Jeffrey, 2004), where according to Day (2004, page 223) the humanism concerns teachers' "holistic, person-centeredness", combined with "warm and caring relationships". This is why it is the helping of children personally, as well as academically, which is considered the most rewarding part of teaching (Sturman et al., 2005) and when this is not aligned, then job satisfaction is

reduced (MacBeath, 2012). Furthermore, once this is not aligned, teachers become demoralised and they then make poor role models for their pupils (Grenville-Leave and Boniwell, 2012). This may well help to explain the high attrition rates currently found in teaching (Smithers and Robinson, 2004).

Unfortunately, according to Forrester (2000), this leaves teachers with three alternatives:

1. To conform to the neoliberal marketisation and managerialisation of our schools
2. To construct a workplace ‘front of house’, which is insincere
3. To leave the profession

In this section, I have attempted to differentiate between ‘training’ and ‘learning’, and have considered notions of learning other than those proposed by Wenger. I have acknowledged the complexities involved, but it is clear that teachers need to continually develop to meet the changing demands of the role. Whether this development requires training or learning, both should be differentiated to meet the individual’s needs and include opportunities to reflect, and should motivate participation extrinsically or intrinsically. I have shown that there is an accumulating body of evidence to suggest that teachers are losing or have lost their autonomy due to neoliberal managerialisation of their roles and that this has had a negative impact on teachers.

## **2.8 Teachers’ learning**

This section follows on from the section looking at communities of practice and how teachers are supported in their learning, adding further insights into how organisational decisions are directly influenced by out of school accountability measures and how this may detract from the learning focus of an individual teacher. This is an equally important element of the study, as I am investigating how schools can give a voice and a choice to the teachers as learners, thereby giving validity of the learning to the community of practice. It is important within this area to consider how the teaching profession as a whole mediates between the desire for individuals to learn and progress their own professional learning pathway, and how influences from outside agencies of accountability, such as Ofsted, impact on their individualised pathway. This element of the study will also consider how these influences are impacting on how teachers perceive their own profession, how it has changed and how it may develop in the future.



It was Stein and Nelson's (2003) perspective which shows that teachers must believe that their own learning is an integral part of their perceived 'professionalism'.

For a number of years, it has been stated that within the teaching profession there has been a loss of professional power (Grace, 1987). Consequently, there has been a shift from ethics to efficiency, where teachers are now seen as technicians (Day et al., 2006). Furthermore, teachers' creativity appears inhibited by necessities set out in formal systems and structures of schools. If this is the case, does it follow that teaching has been deprofessionalised (Pearson and Hall, 1993)? Deprofessionalised, in as much as it has become the role of a technician, one who simply follows pre-prescribed, performative structures and systems. This is associated with the increasing performativity agenda driven by governments and enforced by Ofsted.

This government agenda purports to have honourable origins in that standards are being chased because of the lack of equality of access and outcomes of our current educational system. This is highlighted in the Ofsted annual report for 2012/13, which states that "Raising the achievement of disadvantaged children is a moral and economic imperative" and "white boys and girls from low-income families have the lowest attainment of any poor ethnic group" (Ofsted, 2012). Couple this with the current political situation where politicians seek to justify their policies via questionable data in an attempt to show that they are providing a quality service for the tax payer. This is especially the case in the light of international standards being compared in reports such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report (2013), where the UK was ranked 26th for maths, 23rd for reading and 21st for science, being out-ranked by countries such as Estonia and Poland in Europe as well as many Asian countries. In this environment, it is the accountability to the tax payer that drives the politicians. Therefore, their role is to ensure certain goals are achieved, which requires that policies are systematically and rigorously standardised in all aspects of professional life. This enables them to report back to the public to show that, by their actions, standards have risen.

It has been this model, one of an effective teacher, which has become dominant in recent years as it is closely associated with accountability and performativity (Mahony and Hextall, 2000). However, this view of the job of teachers as skilled but acquiescent technicians does not conform to society's views that they are moral guardians of both the quality of education and children's welfare (Helsby, 1999). For this reason, the

current dominant discourse around the role of the teacher can be seen as a threat to its professional status. Furthermore, the conformity to these prescribed models cannot be considered professional as no new knowledge will be created if sameness reigns (Jarvis, 2010). This notion implies a spectrum on which teachers are positioned; one where at one end, professional learning takes place and at the other end there is technical learning.

In addition, when considering Carr and Kemmis' (1984) hierarchy of teacher knowledge the concept of teacher as technician would mean that teachers' knowledge could stop in the hierarchy at professional knowledge and leave out the top two namely; Educational Theory and General Philosophical Outlooks, Social and Moral Theories. To this extent, teachers are perceived simply as technical cogs in an organisational machine, not autonomous professionals involved in every aspect of a child's education, including social and moral perspectives.

This research is planned so that more can be added to the limited work exploring the balance between 'structure' and 'agency' in teachers' working lives and within that, the impact of 'performativity' on their working lives and how this is dealt with in their community of practice.

The differing points on the spectrum from professional to technical is certainly a topic currently in focus, especially considering the viewpoints put forward by Wilshaw, Ofsted's chief inspector. Some of his recent comments show that he clearly thinks that teachers should have no agency within their schools. This is demonstrated in statements such as: head teachers need to "assert their personal authority" and that head teachers should not need to "constantly worry about staff reaction" and need not conduct "endless meetings to curry favour" with teachers (Telegraph, Nov 2013).

Whilst Wilshaw maintains a powerful voice within this debate, others are beginning to question and challenge this accountability agenda. Even as far back as 2002, Onora O'Neill in her Reith Lecture spoke of the decline of trust within our public service sector and that trust implies an autonomy of our actions to do the best we can, in other words: to act in a professional way. Her point was that public servants are increasingly encouraged to aim to achieve pre-prescribed targets rather than to do what they think is in the best interest of their clients/patients/pupils. This point has resonated recently as the shocking cases of hospitals manipulating targets at the expense of patient care have

hit the headlines. Perhaps it has been the breakdown of the carer's community of practice that has led to this institutional failure.

Furthermore, in terms of teachers' learning, Huberman (1995) suggests that teachers need to be able to learn via experimentation but in an environment without fear of any consequences. Teachers also need regular access to other teacher expertise and forms of external border encounters (*ibid*), but these encounters cannot be seen as benign, as they may resist change or maintain sameness (Hadfield and Jopling, 2012). However, teachers' learning, especially in terms of how they perceive their effectiveness, is strongly associated with other humanistic notions such as values and trust, alongside collegiality (Day, 2012). Thus, teachers' learning has strong links with their identity; their personal life is very much intertwined with their professional life (Woods et al., 1997, Hansen, 2011). So as Day (2012) makes clear, there is a plethora of research suggesting that teaching is a "human endeavour" (Day, 2012, page 15) in which the teachers' identity is as important as what and how she/he teaches. Day surmises from this and his own research that teachers' identities and therefore their learning is not linked to any technical aspects of teaching such as classroom management or test results, but is linked to their humanistic notions, such that they teach because "they stand for something" (Day, 2012, page 15). Therefore it is clear that teachers, as people, cannot be distanced from teachers as professionals (Nias, 1989). So it is a fallacy to connect any technical high quality teaching with pupil learning (Fenstermaker and Richardson, 2005) and furthermore, it is a fallacy to link improvements in technical competence with teacher competence. As Day (2012) points out, leadership of learning is best when there is a combination of personal commitment, experience and values. It is not surprising that when pupils identify good teachers; it is because those teachers demonstrate that they care about both pupil well-being and achievement (Ashley and Lee, 2003).

Moreover, there is much research which highlights teachers' core qualities as being associated with non-neoliberal vocabulary such as care, fairness, kindness and honesty (Fredrickson 2002, Palmer 2004, and Seligman 2002). Thus, teachers appear to align themselves away from neoliberal notions of competition via market forces, whereby the strongest survive and the weakest suffer, to a notion that all pupils in their care have value and are important. When such a teacher views a classroom, they do not see fifty percent of those faces as weak because they are below national average, but they see them as eager, young people ready to learn and ready to be given the chance to engage.

In this section, I have outlined, from the literature, that teachers' professionalism has been lost due to an increasingly specific performativity agenda. While this agenda uses honourable sounding rhetoric, it has nevertheless resulted in a lack of autonomy for teachers and therefore can be seen as de-professionalising. As outlined in the previous section, learning theories include elements of autonomy and so without this, the quality of teachers' learning has to be questioned. Also, teachers approach their role via humanistic notions not performative notions, so learning opportunities that do not include this very personal commitment are unlikely to be motivational.

## **Summary**

At the start of this chapter, I described the changing political context of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism and how this dualism has impacted on our schools, such that what I describe as a paradigm shift has taken place; from one of education as a form of welfare and social advancement to one of human capital production. I have outlined how the driving principles of choice have channelled the work of schools into a whole new arena of competition and attempted to show who benefits most from this choice. In the later section on the political setting, I have considered human capital theory and how this understanding has crept into schools' ways of thinking and doing, such that the quantifiable notions of education have become dominant.

I then discussed Wenger's concept of communities of practice and how these can be seen as being vital, yet complex, in the development of organisations such as schools. I have also considered how communities of practice offer opportunities for change but can be feared, as they acknowledge a reduction in hierarchical power and as such, communities of practice are considered important to schools but can be neglected due to the current complexity found within our schools, highlighting the need for this research.

Later, I differentiated between 'training' and 'learning' and have considered notions of learning other than those proposed by Wenger. I have acknowledged the complexities involved but it is clear that teachers need to continually develop to meet the changing demands of the role. Whether this development requires training or learning, both should be differentiated to meet the individuals' needs and include opportunities to reflect, and should motivate participation extrinsically or intrinsically. I have shown that there is an accumulating body of evidence to suggest that teachers are losing or have

lost their autonomy due to neoliberal managerialisation of their roles and that this has had a negative impact on teachers.

I have outlined that teachers' professionalism has been reduced due to an increasingly specific performativity agenda. Whilst this agenda uses honourable sounding rhetoric, it nevertheless has resulted in a lack of autonomy for teachers and therefore can be seen as de-professionalising teachers. Furthermore, teachers approach their role via humanistic notions, not performative notions and so learning opportunities which do not include this very personal commitment are unlikely to be motivational.

Overall, Wenger's notion can be seen as being vitally important to organisational learning and despite the notion being feared, if the personal demands of the learning can be aligned with those of the organisation, then both can develop. This may involve an approach which includes opportunities to plan, observe and reflect. However, these opportunities may be lost in the managerialised notions of *school improvement*. That is why, for me, leadership is important to direct the purpose of communities of practice, but Donner's 2008 study suggests that communities of practice in schools struggle to become established, whilst I suggest that it is more important than ever to establish extended communities of practice because schools are so isolated, preventing them from providing for an individual's learning needs.

## Chapter 3 – Methodology

### Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the qualitative nature of what I collected and the analytical approaches I have taken while briefly reiterating my phenomenological stance. This enables me to detail the methods used to analyse the participant's descriptions. I have described the notions of three social theorists; Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu, so that the reader can appreciate how I have used these social theories as a lens with which to analyse the teachers' lifeworlds within a setting of the public sphere. I also outline my research strategy, the process I undertook and my role within that process, such that I consider reflexivity to be a vital element of my approach. I then outline considerations prior to data collection, the data gathering and the interviews, before we finally meet the participants. However, before giving a brief pen portrait of the participants I include a consideration of the life phases of teachers to add richness to the picture of this small cohort. Finally, I attempt to convey the complex process of creating themes from the data which involved a total immersion into the transcripts and audio of each interview.

### 3.1 The nature of what is to be collected

The philosophical assumptions outlined in Chapter One, which enabled a fuller understanding of neoliberalism and the changing nature of teaching outlined in Chapter Two, must now be nested neatly with the methodological procedural assumptions. To begin this, I will outline my orientation towards idiographic or nomothetic assumptions. An idiographic procedure follows the path of cultural and historical particulars whilst a nomothetic procedure follows a path in order to establish general laws. The former follows an interpretative process, whilst the latter follows a positivist process. As I have made clear in Chapter One, this study is exclusively qualitative, based on the philosophically oriented position of social constructionism due to my epistemological assumptions and so this research is obviously oriented towards idiographic methodologies. Thus, this stance bridges my philosophical positioning with my procedural techniques.

Idiographic methods are based on the notion of social enquiry where the investigation centres on the individual and his or her experience. It is not interested in generalities

(Jary and Jary, 1991). For me, it involves the drilling down into in-depth accounts of an individual's experiences. Alongside this drilling down is an empathetic approach, designed to enable the researcher to get closer to the stories being told. Therefore, for me, it is about using qualitative techniques to generate an understanding of the context in which meanings are being made, despite those meanings being made in a complex setting which includes the social, cultural, economic and political environment in which teachers live. It is this complex environment, outlined in Chapter Two, that shapes my interpretations and those of the participants, and it is the focus on those phenomena which will become the foundation of this research.

### **3.2 Phenomenologist Philosophy – the basis of my analytical approach**

Phenomenology is a qualitative research method which I used to explore the lived experiences of teachers. It is an inquiry method that has been used commonly in social and human sciences. From an educational perspective, schools are 'life-worlds' but this time in the sense of Berger and Luckmann (1966) not Habermas, in which reality emerges through an experiential process.

Phenomenology as a philosophy has changed over time, but I used it as a qualitative research method to investigate the lived experiences, as a description of things as my participants perceive them (Hammond et al., 1991). That is why this research searched for the ways individuals experience phenomena and the related understandings that they have attached to them. It is within the substance of experience that I have been able to describe underlying reason (Pivcevic, 1970), in my analysis sections and subsequent discussion. This means my research is idiographic and has looked for the meaning of specific and unique phenomena. Like Husserl (1859 - 1938), I located essential features which transcend the particular circumstances, so I articulate the given experience for others. I adopted Husserl's *phenomenological attitude* only when listening and re-listening to the transcripts and not during the interviews. During the interviews, I was in the same world as the teachers, again in Husserl's words: in the *natural attitude*. However, it must be made clear to the reader that my phenomenological attitude has travelled its own journey and at the start was a very different beast with basic understandings of social construction, until now that my phenomenological attitude is highly attuned to the neoliberal agenda.

I used an interpretative phenomenological analysis allowing me to follow a rigorous method, enabling validation of my data, following an approach outlined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). This study is based on detailed, intensive knowledge of a small number of related cases exploring the lived experiences of teachers as learners within their school as part of a community of practice. This enabled me to examine the complexity of teachers' lives and in revealing that complexity, I was able to explore the forms of change that had taken place and explore the relationship between participants' learning and their community of practice, including a focus on the contemporary political context.

### 3.3 Methods

Hermeneutics is an interpretative approach named after the Greek god Hermes, whose role in Greek mythology was as divine messenger, with the task to listen, understand and interpret the meanings of the other gods so humans could understand. The term was used to describe the process of understanding biblical texts. Whilst I did not interpret messages of this nature, I did attempt to understand the meaning behind the descriptions of my participants from their point of view. This is the notion first established by Weber (1864-1920) termed *Verstehen*, described as "a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effect." (Weber, 1947, page 88; from Bryman, 2008).

The decision to approach my research in this way was directed by the nature of the topic, the research questions and other research, as outlined in Chapter Two. This research is interpretative because of the nature of the study, in that it explores teachers' lived experiences, and because the research question is focused on finding the meaning not the quantifying of an organisational phenomena (Daft, 1983). Furthermore, this study is interpretative because other forms of analysis would not enable the thorough exploration of the participants' views and so find the richness of meaning within their words. Therefore, this research is inductive with a complex and shifting reality as expressed by the participants, so the process was both flexible and iterative.

To do this, I used interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009), which uses features of semiotics and poststructuralism to focus on variable meanings (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). Discourse analysis ranges from analysis based on the language features of texts to more socially focused views, which consider the social and cultural



setting (Fairclough, 2003). My use of interpretative discourse analysis is oriented towards the latter of the two; the social and cultural aspects of the text. This allows me to look for patterns and traits within the language used, and to pay attention to the situation's context. This is important to my study, as different cultures have different ways of doing and talking about that doing through their cultural language, and teachers are no exception. Teachers, like other subcultures, have developed their way of speaking with a setting of other texts (Lemke, 1992), from political commentaries about teaching to the 'in-house' ways teachers talk. Consequently, the texts I created of the interviews will have an inter-textual relationship with what has gone before (Bazerman, 2004).

As stated, there is some confusion over the precise definition of discourse analysis as it wavers along a continuum from textually oriented analysis to more socially oriented analysis. My stance is towards the socially oriented end of the continuum in that I see discourse analysis as a view of language at text level, where that language has been used to achieve communication and to participate in an act of communication in order to achieve understanding. This, therefore, involves how people manage these interactions in the interview situation, but as stated, it does this within a socially and culturally oriented setting. For me, interpretative phenomenological analysis is centred on how the participants communicate beyond the language used and it is about my interpretation of those communications to understand their ideas and beliefs. For this reason, I see interpretative discourse analysis as a method to unlock socially constructed reality; one which is embedded within its own social and cultural practices, and a communication method which is used to shape the world around those involved. Interpretative discourse analysis enabled the exploring of this shape or experience, something that is the essence of this study.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis assumes that the teacher's language is used to construct accounts or stories of their educational world and as such, these stories are active and functional. Therefore, this perspective emphasises the social nature of our words and actions, and enables me to highlight how teachers use their words to make sense of their workplace world. Here, discourse is understood as a complex arrangement of words that constructs objects, sustains schools as organisations, emphasises power and clarifies ideologies (Parker, 1990).

To be more specific, it is a relation between language and thought, and language and action. It is concerned with the way people use cognitive tools, of which the most important are symbols and the most important symbols for this study are words. This cognition or thinking using symbols is done individually and communally as well as intra- and inter-personally (Harre, 1987). It is at this point of communal creation that history and culture become so important, because the community passes on these notions and accounts for the rights and duties of its members. Again, it is at this point that power within that community becomes so important, because the distribution of power is closely associated with the allocations and accounts of people's rights and duties. This is not to say that these rights and duties are fixed; far from it, they change over time, as do the power relations amongst the group. The rights and duties must be seen as fluid, waxing and waning, and constantly changing, sometimes in great leaps, such as a change in leadership style and sometimes in subtle ways, such as when an individual's identity changes, for example: after returning from paternity leave. This is a complex and labile process, but one that is never stagnant and so it is the essence of human life as we plot our trajectory towards a perceived better future. This study is a snapshot of that trajectory of the communally built notions of teacher's rights and duties that it will seek to summarise. As such, this is why positioning theory is so important to my study because it offers a way of understanding people's actions in that they take up or lay down their rights and duties, plus how they are refused or defended, and how they are attributed or appropriated.

Context is fundamental to positioning theory because language is so fluid that it varies from one moment to the next and from one situation to the next. For example, when teachers use the word 'management' and not the word 'leadership', it subtly changes what is being said, referring to both a tier of power positioned above the teacher but in the current context to use 'management' implies a lack of 'leadership' within that higher tier, inferring a lack of respect for that power. According to Harre, there are three background conditions which mutually determine one another namely *positions*, *illocutionary force* and *story lines*. My interview schedule was designed to elicit a story line and interpretative discourse analysis will take account of the illocutionary force via both listening to and reading (with stage directions) the transcripts many times, allowing an interpretation of the positions of the teachers.

One of the basic conventions of interpretative discourse analysis is that language as symbols concern action and function. This means that teachers talk intentionally to build the stories of their social world and in this construction there is variability. This notion of variability is important to interpretative discourse analysis because language may change according to the functional use of the words (Potter et al., 1990). So for me, interpretative discourse analysis loses any positivist assumptions about people having fixed attitudes (Wetherall et al., 1987). Interpretative discourse analysis does not necessarily assume that the words used reflect the participants' underlying attitudes; instead it focuses on the actual discourse as a construction and the functions that people put in their words as well as the consequences of those functions (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). Consequently, it focuses on social practice, not the perceptions of the speakers, so it is full of paradox and contradiction and is messy. Furthermore, the notion that language is slippery and complex, adds to this messiness and that the relationship of language to reality is unreliable (Derrida, 1998). Therefore, I will be specific about my research strategy, so it is clear to the reader how these possible paradoxes and contradictions were made sense of.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

The sorts of knowledge that this research has located depended on what I set out to find (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). So the research strategy seeks the best way to locate those forms of knowledge and as such, it was decided that a small number of semi-structured interviews would be carried out. It is within this small cohort that I have depicted the complexity of the subject of teachers' lived experiences by exploring and analysing the cases. This research is empirical and seeks to describe a phenomenon in a real-life setting. My data was collected from a variety of teachers in a variety of schools. In-depth interviews to gather rich detail and to validate the participant's understandings of events the interviews were semi-structured. For this reason, the interview process was designed to collect a narrative of the participant's journey through their teaching careers.

As this study uses an interpretative phenomenological analysis, I wanted to create descriptions of lived experiences which were highly detailed and nuanced. Whilst I understood that this would need a thorough and painstaking analysis, it was this level of fine-grained account that would allow access to the participants' socially constructed reality. Furthermore, I wanted each participant to be able to have a very distinctive voice within the study, such that those characters resonated with the reader. As such, I

wanted a small number of participants to allow the richness of their voice to be heard as an individual, but also enough voices to enable a discussion around shared experiences. The sample size of six was chosen because interpretative phenomenological analysis explores the way people use language and variations in linguistic patterns that can arise from small numbers of people (Potter and Wetherall, 1987).

Moreover, the main concern of interpretative phenomenological analysis is with a detailed account of individual accounts of individual experience (Smith et al., 2009) and so I wanted to collect quality descriptions, not a huge quantity. With a small cohort, I felt I would be able to find meanings, points of similarity and difference, enabling some generalisation, but I did not want to become overwhelmed by large amounts of transcripts, because it is “more problematic to try to meet interpretative phenomenological analysis commitments with a sample which is ‘too large’, than with one that is ‘too small’” (Smith et al., 2009, page 37).

#### **3.4.1 The Validity of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

As this research is qualitative and uses complex understandings within its methodology, it will be equally complex to assert any validity claims. However, this does not mean the work is not valid; just that to assess its quality is more difficult. This has been a much discussed dilemma amongst qualitative researchers. One of the reasons for my philosophical understandings of the methodology being so in-depth is to quash such validity concerns, because in order to evaluate the study, one must use the correct criteria and for me, it is this appropriate criterion which I have outlined earlier. As such, there is no easy to use checklist with which to validate this study. However, I will use Yardley’s (2010) four broad principles for assessing the quality of research as a discussion point. The four principles are:

- i. sensitivity to context
- ii. commitment and rigour
- iii. transparency and coherence
- iv. impact and importance

#### **Sensitivity to context**

I have demonstrated this within the literature review, especially in terms of recognising the macro politics, neoliberalism, driving educational change as well as social-cultural

norms such as managerialisation. Furthermore, it will become clear within the analysis that my sensitivity to context is evident in the interview material, such that participants felt comfortable enough to share very personal and heartfelt emotional responses. Likewise, my attempt to discuss reflexivity and my role in the research, something which shows sensitivity to the context of me as the researcher.

### **Commitment and Rigour**

I have attempted to capture this in later sections but have struggled to articulate the long hours, weeks and months poring over transcripts, sections of transcripts, listening and re-listening to the interviews. However, some evidence in Appendix 14 shows how over several weeks I used the space in a local sports hall to attempt to theme and section off the participants dialogue.

### **Transparency and Coherence**

Again, evidence for this is found in later pages, where I describe the research process, including appendices showing the interview schedule and the steps taken to analyse the participants' descriptions. I have also included the false starts and the changes as a way of helping the reader sense the openness with which I have approached this study. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that at every stage, my supervision team read the transcripts alongside me and helped guide my interpretations.

### **Impact and Importance**

For me, this is the most powerful of all the validity claims, as what my findings show resonates with wider research and findings regarding the state of English schools and welfare organisations. Furthermore, it is the grounding of this research via Wenger's notion of communities of practice (1989) which adds richness to this validity because it offers a critique of the current organisational structures in schools and so enables the visioning of an alternative, improved structure.

## **3.5 Theoretical Framework**

In this section, I outline literature regarding three social theorists who will help me to scaffold my thinking about my analysis and form the theoretical framework for the study. I have felt the need to include them because I want to use the notions they outline as a tool to help me understand the language and notions described by the participants. I

have found this particularly necessary because of the nature of the socially constructed political stances described in the literature review and how these have constituted themselves within the participant's descriptions of their lived experiences.

Moreover, I want to enhance the areas I have detailed above, in particular, Foucault's notion of a socialised citizen. According to Foucault, this citizen is made responsible for their own conduct within perceived parameters of 'freedom', via a notion of internalised norms and directions that monitor and control people's behaviour, the notion of 'conduct of conduct' (Barry et al., 1996). This was done in a so-called 'government at arm's length' (Foucault, 1991) way, where the spaces of economic and civil activity were delegated to bureaucratised professional authorities and it was seen by Foucault that these independent bodies instigated programmes, strategies and regimes to maintain the wellbeing of society.

For me, a link exists between Foucault's notions of a socialised citizen and two other thinkers; Raymond Williams (1921-1988) and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). In Williams' 'Keywords' (1976), he explores historical changes in the meaning of 109 key words, in order to identify the significance to our culture of these changes. His study wasn't to view these words as neutral, static vocabulary, but as an exploration of the vocabulary of a crucial area of social and cultural change, something which has been inherited within precise historical and social conditions. As such, Williams supposes that culturally important words shift over time and it is the participant's notion underpinning the words they use that I explored, therefore exploring their notions of a shifting culture.

Furthermore a study exploring shifting notions of vocabulary should, for me, also include a cultural dimension; as such I include the notion of cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) refers to a form of rule or domination achieved through cultural means. It refers to the ability of a section of society to hold power over social institutions and so to strongly influence the everyday thoughts, expectations, and behaviour of people. According to Gramsci, this is done by directing the normative ideas, values and beliefs so that they become the dominant worldview of a society. Cultural hegemony functions by achieving the consent of the masses to abide by social norms and the rules of law by framing a certain worldview and the social and economic structures that go with it, as legitimate, and designed for the benefit of all.

Before I begin my analysis, I want to be able to understand the nature of my participant's descriptions based on three theorists; Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu. For this reason I have applied the theoretical lenses used in the analysis of features of our society to focus the study. Such theoretical lenses have long struggled with the issues of agency and structure. Theorists such as Weber and Simmel focused on micro-sociology, in that they reflected on the actions of actors within differing cultures and cultural settings. Whilst thinkers such as Marx, Durkheim and Parsons focused on the macro-sociology, the institutions and structures. For me, it is Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu who bridge this divide between the macro and the micro, between our agency and society's structures, and it is for these reasons that I briefly discuss key features of these theorists, which will enhance the understandings from my analysis.

Firstly, I will use Habermas' notion of lifeworlds. Secondly I will use Giddens' structuration theory. Finally I will use Bourdieu's concept of doxa.

### *3.5.1 Analysis via Habermas' Theories:*

In this section I will describe the importance of Habermas' lifeworlds and public sphere to this study. That is why I bring to the foreground now the oppositional positioning as taken by the participants, so that the reader can appreciate the analysis set within a Habermasian conceptual framework. However, I also note that these are dangerous waters, as these understandings involve language structures which, as noted previously, are vital to the neoliberal agenda.

Habermas opposed the Frankfurt school of sociology which proposed that there is an *apparatus* that socialises us individually and therefore creates mass conformity, such that social integration can be seen as indoctrination. Habermas said humans are too complex for such an analysis and I agree, as my participants are refusing that indoctrination; they are opposing social integration. Habermas sought a theory which combines our actions, via agency, and structure, as well as what motivates us and our patterns of communication. Therefore he proposed a notion where our social systems form "networks of communicative" which involve socialised personalities and speaking subjects (Habermas, 1979, page 98). What he proposed was a new way of looking at our world, where "social systems are seen here as lifeworlds that are symbolically structured" (Habermas, 1979, page 100).

Habermas' notions of a lifeworld is described as being the foundations or building blocks of individual identity and are therefore essential elements brought together from the realms of culture and its associated meanings and symbols. All these elements of personality, culture, meaning and symbols are said to form the basis of our communication, which forms Habermas' concept of language. Therefore, Habermas' ideas are based on notions of free and open discourse with agents and that this discourse encompasses the autonomy of the individual, a sense of responsibility and a tendency towards building a consensus. However, Habermas does recognise that in order to have linguistically negotiated action, certain elements need to be validated, such as beliefs, values and notions of truth. Consequently, Habermas proposed four validity claims, which I have used when reflecting on my participants' words, as they form the basis of a consensus between us. These are:

1. What the individuals say is comprehensible – yes, in this case.
2. That what is said is true in their opinion – yes, in this case.
3. That it is a sincere expression of the individual's beliefs – yes, in this case.
4. That it is right according to normative checks – I have an issue with normative checks because of the vehement opposition expressed, as we shall see.

During the interview, we did not disagree or argue. What was expressed was a communicatively agreed consensus based on an understanding of our positions within a teacher's lifeworld. As such, I want to explore what is the nature of this opposition as expressed in sentences like Theresa's: "I haven't been listened to, I haven't been supported".

Habermas describes society as having two parts: The lifeworld, which functions via communicative action and is oriented towards issues regarding our quality of life. And society, which is constructed of a system that functions through deliberate actions with a strategic, long term goal, using persuasion in the form of money, sanctions or power, and as such, is not interested in qualities of life. It should be noted here that teachers' salaries were raised quite considerably during the period of New Labour, in particular the salaries of leadership positions. Also, the sanctions imposed by outside agencies such as Ofsted and the lesson observation judgements fit with Habermas' notions of sanctions. For me, this is where my participants' opposition makes sense. They express



their lifeworlds in opposition to the system, a commonly found opposition often expressed as being the ‘new social movements’ such as feminism, LGBT rights or ecology, all of which are mediated in what Habermas calls the *public sphere*. This raises the question as to whether teachers could form a new social movement as they seek to move policy away from neoliberal notions towards a notion of education without managerialisation or human capital?

For Habermas, the public sphere is where our cultural institutions mediate between us; the people and the state, including all aspects of government, as well as mediating between private interests and collective interests. However, this is an area considerably blurred now by the neoliberalisation of the welfare state in that government officials are an accepted element of both private interests and the state. For example, Jeremy Hunt made £17 million out of an IT tool which finds education courses and so is a form of advertising for schools, colleges and universities; Michael Fallon is on the board of Quality Care Homes, a company that sits within the NHS to provide care homes for the elderly, and Theresa May established a payment services business alongside the Bank of England, an institution once solely controlled by the government.

Despite this, the current ‘public spheres’ described by my participants appear to offer little mediation, as they are dominated by acquiescent behaviours driven by monitoring devices and therefore de-democratising this public sphere. Not only do the monitoring devices limit talk and so opportunities to mediate, but they also refocus the talk on performativity with regard to that monitoring and away from any form of political participation.

Habermas’ notions were formed from an understanding of talk as communicative action in eighteenth-century coffee houses, updating his notions to describe magazines and newspapers being communication methods of state control (1979). It is here that my findings and my understanding of the current neoliberal hegemony begins to split from Habermas. Habermas’ notions of social life being a rational embodiment of communication coming from free citizens is at odds with what I have described in earlier sections, in terms of the turn towards neoliberalism. However, Habermas does acknowledge this in that the “development of capitalism threatens the integrity of the public sphere”. Moreover, that a “pseudo-public sphere emerges characterised by bureaucratically closed modes of communication” (Habermas, 1992, page 195). This is

now strikingly congruent with what my participants report, in that they describe one-way forms of communication and monitoring structures, not listening ones.

Despite this congruency between Habermas (1992) and what my participants say, I fear something far worse is going on than simple bureaucratic manipulations of social control. As Habermas (1992) concedes, the system attempts to distort the forms of linguistic mediation as discussed above, in that language can become dominated by “the functional imperatives of instrumental rationality” (Habermas, 1992, page 140). Now the whole clash of lifeworlds and the system takes on a different characteristic as it uses distorted communication devices which seek to coerce or even force the erosion of opportunities for rational communicative action. Here, the system actually tries to move in, to cohabit with the lifeworld via a homogenisation of culture and growing bureaucracy, trying to create passivity and a hidden decline in autonomy because free conversation has been hijacked with distorted forms of communication that oppose the principles of cooperation, collective understanding and open dialogue. Furthermore, Habermas’ notion assumes a willingness of the citizen, in this case the teacher, to embrace a better argument (1996), but the managerialisation described by my participants uses quantitative methodologies only, and this blurs that better argument.

This is an area that has been well covered by scholars such as Fairclough, who already notes that “managerial government is partly managing language” (Fairclough, 2000, page 7). Yet I am disturbed by the very notion of a managerial government, because managerialisation is a notion opposed by my participants. As such, we shouldn’t underestimate the ways in which language structures possible ways of thinking, doing and reasoning to the detriment of other ways of thinking, doing and reasoning (Biesta, 2009). Furthermore, Habermas’ acceptance that the media creates a manufactured public sphere only adds to the issue that teachers face when attempting to make sense of their lifeworld.

However, I have an issue with Habermas in that for him to attempt to address the issue of dualism in sociology, the agency and structure issue, and the macro and micro issue, he had to re-introduce functionalism, determinism and some speculative philosophies in his theory of communicative action. Habermas, for me, fails to show the role of collective actors, such as teachers, in the process of system integration and therefore I

will acknowledge his contribution via an understanding of lifeworlds and the public sphere, but will use the lens of Giddens to enrich my understandings further.

### *3.5.2 Giddens' Theory of Structuration*

Like Habermas, Giddens (1986) is critical of other social theories such as Parsons' Theory (1965) and, like Habermas, Giddens seeks to resolve the system/actor dualism. Giddens considered that previous social theory can at best only offer basic sensitizing concepts (Giddens, 1986) that illuminate basic processes of human action. As such, Giddens dismisses functionalism and criticises Marxism because it does not take into account any communicative action among humans and simply shows humans as being driven along an involuntary track; our cartwheels kept in the ruts by basic responses to stimulus (for Marx it was the means of production). Yet Giddens is also critical of symbolic interactionism for not giving enough credibility to social structures and side-stepping what motivates humans. Giddens is damning of structuralists, including Levi-Strauss, because as Giddens sees it, they do not conceptualise this structure as something that has been actively created by free thinking, communicative and reflexive humans.

What Giddens does attempt to do is to redefine these concepts of the actor/structure dualism, whereby the structure does not fix our actions and the structure is not just the result of our actions. He notes that our social practices constitute us as actors and in turn, embody and make real those structures. As Giddens sees it, our social behaviour arbitrates between agency and structure. Furthermore, this arbitration involves reflexive monitoring as we continually evaluate how we and others around us react to circumstances in various settings. Giddens suggests that there are three sections that all work as process. Firstly, the reflexive monitoring of actions, then the rationalisation of those actions, then within these, the motivation behind that action. For this reason, Giddens sees agency as a process along a continuum whereby our life events add meaning to that agency. However, Giddens also sees that our purpose and motivation for a course of action is based on knowledge and consciousness. Furthermore, he suggests that we can "act otherwise" when we intervene with the world in an attempt to influence certain affairs (Giddens, 1986, page 14). However, as discussed in the previous section on Habermas, teachers' ability to "act otherwise" has been curtailed due to the language of accountability being dominant and the monitoring devices placed

upon teachers forcing them to kowtow, leaving them with notions of powerlessness and the associated loss of professional autonomy as described in the literature review.

Giddens' notion of consciousness has two levels: At one level is the 'discursive' consciousness, where we rationalise our actions to ourselves. For teachers, this is where we make sense of the 'how' and 'why' of doing the job. Giddens' second level of consciousness, he terms the 'practical' consciousness, where we have stocks of unarticulated knowledge, ritualised and tacit, which give us an understanding of the rules regarding our behaviour. Giddens suggests that we have "ontological security" (Giddens, 1986, page 50) when our discursive consciousness and our practical consciousness are aligned and congruent. Here, Giddens suggests that we build our own security system, so we can avoid anxiety and preserve our self-esteem; something the teaching profession appears to have lost.

For me, Giddens' theory of structuration has relevance to the participants' descriptions of change because, unlike Habermas, Giddens uses Heidegger to help him explain the temporal nature of his theory. As such, Giddens (ibid) describes three forms of temporality:

- a. The *durée* of everyday life
- b. The *durée* of an individual's life
- c. *Longue durée*, which he describes as institutional existence.

My study has sought to explore teachers' everyday lives and has included their teacher life cycles, so includes both *durées* a. and b. For me, it is their descriptions of the *longue durée* that underlies their descriptions of change. This has become a dominant theme, because it is within the context of the participants' change experience that they describe institutional changes. Moreover, they place the blame on the institutional changes on governmental interference which connects the institutional *longue durée* with the *durée* of an individual's life, because the participants have experienced this change during their life cycle as teachers.

Giddens acknowledges change in that he describes three forms of structure and if one part changes, then they all change, in a constant process of trying to nest together. The three forms of structure are:

1. Structural principles – the macro principles of societies, such as capitalism.
2. Structures – which he describes as rules and sets of resources.
3. Structural properties – which he describes as the institutional features of our social systems.

Whilst 1 and 2 become routinised in our everyday lives, it is within 3, the structural properties, that we have our tacit understandings on which we base our actions. It is here that we continually evaluate our actions based on our practical consciousness. And it is here that I begin to understand my participants' constructions more clearly, because they are describing changes in routinised forms of structures, where those changes are at odds with their practical consciousness. It is here that as Giddens suggests a rupture can occur. For me, participants are describing not ontological security where their discursive consciousness is congruent with their practical consciousness, but where their understanding of the changes in their schools via managerialisation has caused a rupture, such that they no longer have ontological security but rather have ontological insecurity. Here, their ritualised, tacit knowledge and rules of behaviour regarding what it is to be good teachers, has been removed from their understanding of the 'how' and 'why' they joined the teaching profession. Consequently, they feel ontologically lost.

However, because Giddens' structuration theory acknowledges change temporally, this ontological insecurity is part of a process, in that society has changed from a notion of welfare capitalism to one of neoliberal, marketised and therefore managerialised welfare, and that process has taken place faster than my participants can change their identities. In other words, the structural principles on which our society is based have changed at a faster pace than our structural properties. Thus, for me, the participants describe ontological insecurity but this insecurity is actually structuration *lag* associated with their identities being formed during the period of hegemonic belief in welfare capitalism and that those beliefs remain anchored there, despite the swirling tides of neoliberalism manhandling the language used both socially and institutionally. As such, my analysis is an attempt to identify notions of ontological insecurity and so identify structuration lag.

However, before I do so, I should briefly explore the opposite of structuration lag. If, as argued above, people's identities formed during one period of time struggle to cope with change and cause differing ontological understandings based on time, it must also

follow that there existed ontological *pioneers*. In other words, if some lag behind current hegemonies (ontological laggards?), others at some point must have pushed the old order out of the way. For example, William Wilberforce, the abolitionist who opposed the slave trade and helped change the course of history saw the world differently to the anti-abolitionists. Consequently, Wilberforce was the ontological pioneer whilst the anti-abolitionist were the structuration laggards of their time. The same could be said for all great figures of history that have sought and succeeded in changing the way we perceive the world. So could we describe Thatcher as an ontological pioneer?

In this section, I have discussed Giddens' structuration theory in an attempt to enhance the reader's understanding of the analysis which follows. Thus, I have outlined a temporal concept of social change and shown how change can create people whose internal structures are at odds with external structural properties, such that they are ontologically insecure and, in the temporal sense, are structuration laggards. To link Habermas and Giddens, they sense a 'rupture' between 'lifeworlds'.

### *3.5.3 Analysis via Bourdieu's theories*

While the notions of structuration lag via ontological insecurity helps me to understand the perspectives of my participants, Giddens' model is based on a theoretical analysis. This study is empirical and includes, because the participants focus on change, historical analysis. Therefore, I will now move from Giddens to Bourdieu, because his understanding of sociology concerns the theoretical and empirical. As outlined above, my understanding of social construction includes the constituent parts of our society, historical and cultural past and for me, Bourdieu also unites theory with social and historical analysis.

Furthermore, Giddens suggests that organisations such as schools only exist via the daily actions of individuals and as such, do not sustain themselves beyond this point. Whilst I accept this in terms of the day to day practices of teachers and pupils, other structures exist beyond the school gates. The schools in this study are partly administered by a local authority, which is influenced by government and so the lived experiences of teachers cannot be studied in isolation as outside influences exert their power and restrict organisational and individual freedoms. Furthermore, a school's 'ethos and values' can pre-exist teachers joining a school, despite those teachers

influencing practice via their individual agency. Therefore, other forms of structure, not least neoliberalism, existed before teachers use that agency and these structures carry on beyond the everyday experience of my participants – so Giddens' theory begins to look flawed.

Bourdieu (1984) considered that actors make sense of their world, and therefore how to act in it, because of genetic structuralism whereby the understanding of 'objective structures' is inseparable from 'mental structures'. Furthermore, Bourdieu tackles macro/micro, objective/subjective and agency/structure dualisms by developing his theory where various 'fields' interact with 'socialised subjectivity'. Bourdieu rejects the notion of society as a system and realises it as a network of objective relations. He sees these objective relations as being a structured social arena or a 'field', such as an economic field which includes wealth and the skills with which to realise symbolic capital. However, this is not a simple concept, as fields may also have sub-fields; for example, a cultural field includes notions of knowledge and intellect but will envelop sub-fields such as literature, music or art. However, fields are not 'apparatus', which control society, although they may have distinctive logic with distinctive principles and even a body of specialists who judge practice.

Bourdieu worked towards his dualist theory balancing structure and agency during his anthropological work in Kabylia (now Algeria) on 'honour' in their society. Bourdieu found that his participants, as knowledgeable agents with a sense of how to act, get that agency through negotiation within the community. The frame of understanding Bourdieu developed to explore these issues was his concept of 'habitus', a combination of the fields mentioned earlier and 'socialised subjectivity', by which Bourdieu means the localised day to day world of people and their associated understanding of that world, making up that lived experience. It was the activities and meanings behind actions that are habit-forming which Bourdieu found so interesting. That's why, for me, Bourdieu connects with Habermas, in that he recognises both the social system as a structure and the social agency of the individual, thereby connecting *lifeworlds* and *habitus*. However, *habitus* is used as a more general term and is used to distinguish between differing sets of social behaviours. Therefore, different groups differentiate themselves by their actions, rituals and practices.

Bourdieu is important in this context because his notion of habitus includes the interlacing of historical structures with individual agency, which in turn is practiced in particular ways. An example of historical structures in our schools would be the use of timetables divided into subject-based knowledge and taught by specialists who use their individualised agency to pass on that expert knowledge.

Similarly to Giddens' *rules and resources*, habitus has a duality in that it can lead to social change but it also restrains it. As a field endows itself with the trappings of specialists and specific ways of doing things, it creates its own protection, creating a vested interest in its own preservation. As such, habitus can be seen as a restricting concept, resistant to change, so can be considered a notion of social reproduction and not social transformation. Can you envisage a large secondary school without the structure of a timetable?

Because of this notion of habitus, a notion of pulling individuals in and socialising them into a group way of thinking, it creates those in the group and those not, thus creating tension between groups and therefore notions of power. If we add this notion of habitus border encounters to Bourdieu's other main contribution, his notion of capital (1984), it helps to conceptualise other areas of tension where power comes into play. For this study, Bourdieu's 'big four' capitals; economic, political, social and cultural (1984), will all play a part as the habitus of my teacher participants is attacked by constant change as described above in the literature review and below in the analysis.

Bourdieu (1984) was interested in inequality within society and he created a notion of 'doxa' in order to describe how inequality can exist via 'misrecognition', in that inequalities can be so ingrained, so taken for granted, that they become invisible. This doxa, which is a combination of accepted social norms and unorthodox views, is our unstated, common sense view of the world. It is "an adherence of relations of order which, because they structure inseparately both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident" (Bourdieu, 1984, page 417). Bourdieu adopted this term from the pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides (c. 515-450 BC), who argued that an ultimate reality of how the world worked (λογος – logos, literally meaning 'the word'), was contrary to what humans perceived of that reality, our perception or doxa (δόξα) (Crompton, 2016).



I want to use this notion of doxa to help describe my participants' world view. It is the nature of their oppositional descriptions that they describe how their field of understanding of their duties as teachers has been attacked, such that their taken for granted knowledge of the role of teachers has changed. Within a teacher habitus, my participants act according to principles which affirm their thoughts and actions. These principles are not held in place by any apparatus (either physical or symbolic), but have been instilled in every member by their early experiences of joining the teaching profession. As such, there is a little of what Bourdieu calls 'yesterday's man' (1984) in my participants in that what they describe is articulated via a habitus with a long history, and one that they cling to, hence my participants' resistance.

However, given the objective structures which were stable when the participants entered the profession, and hence the ease at which they were reproduced within the teachers' 'mental structures', how have those objective structures become disturbed? Given the discussion above, regarding neoliberalism and its associated place along a capitalist continuum, the strength of the disturbance is associated with the strength of the fundamental underlying structures of neoliberalism, those of capitalism itself. While the habitus of teachers has remained stable, arguably for over 30 years since the post-war reforms, the embedded nature of a more powerful form of habitus has grown in strength over the last 30 years. The stability of the habitus concerning capitalism, especially since the collapse of the USSR, is now not "one possibility among others but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned" (Bourdieu, 1984, page 72). Hence, for me the opposition to the changes described by my participants describe an underlying power struggle between teachers' habitus based on notions of humanism, democracy, and social justice, and the overarching habitus associated with capitalism and political emancipation driven by the neoliberal agenda.

The weaponry used in this power struggle is the rhetoric of crisis as discussed above. For me, it is the crisis created by fear; fear that our country will fail to cope in a globalised economy; fear that our schools will fail to create the human capital with which to fight within the globalised economy; fear that teachers will fail to produce that required human capital; and fear that pupils will not be able to cope within the globalised economy without that human capital.

This notion of crisis is recognised by Bourdieu and conceptualised as a point at which our everyday order is challenged and therefore requires extraordinary discourse (1984).

In this case, the discourse is that of a marketised and managerialised notion of education. Crisis, according to Bourdieu, “constrains” and “confines” (1984, page 164) our reality, in that we perceive that we have no choice and so in this case, teachers do as they are advised because of the ‘good of the country’. However, Bourdieu also talks of “arbitrariness” in the production of power relations (1984, page 164). For example, he discusses the arbitrariness of distinctions between men and women and different races, which for Bourdieu is done by securing “misrecognition” (1984, page 165), in that the arbitrary nature of those relations is unseen. For this reason, I ask whether these crises are also arbitrary; what is the nature of our fear of globalisation? Is it simply the economy or is it a misrecognition built to help push forward a neoliberal agenda?

Bourdieu describes the habitus as producing a series of “moves” (1984), which are organised objectively and may appear as a strategy but are not the product of a genuine strategic intention; they are just one strategy among many possible ones. Therefore, the argument that there is a neoliberal march towards a reductionist state is not a strategic intent, but via the guiding principles of neoliberalism, it makes a series of moves and may end up in that direction – but equally it may not. As such, when I hear the sincerity of neoliberal politicians discussing how Singapore is a threat because it is ahead of England in the latest PISA tests, I believe the comments are sincere and not just a cynical attempt to confuse the public into reaching a reductionist state via the marketisation and eventual privatisation of our schools. Consequently, my findings are set within a locus of the confrontation of competing discourses whose political truth may be overtly declared or may remain hidden (Bourdieu, 1994), and I suggest that for many involved it remains hidden “even from the eyes of those engaged in it” (ibid, page 166). So when I hear Kenneth Clarke talk passionately about a “Singapore threat”, he is sincere but his habitus includes notions of misrecognition (The Today programme, Radio 4, 20.10.2015).

A final relevance of Bourdieu to this study involves the much described managerialisation of the teaching profession. Bourdieu’s notion of habitus is one in which every member is instilled with the dispositions of that habitus without any form of apparatus of control, but the current managerialised monitoring *is* an apparatus of

control. Thus, as Bourdieu states, the rule is only “second best” to the “collective enterprise of inculcation tending to produce habitus that are capable of generating practices regulated without express regulation or an institutionalised call to order” (Bourdieu, 1984, page 17). It is this notion of second best that my participants acknowledge, fear and attempt to subvert. Furthermore, is this second rate monitoring responsible for the lack of *love* within our schools, in that to do the job today is a matter of following rules not dealing with human beings. Could this notion be expanded into other welfare organisations such as healthcare, whereby nurses perform their roles according to the rules but neglect their patients? Do teachers perform their role as creators of human capital, getting pupils to pass exams, but neglect their pupils’ welfare? Is this reflected in the current state of our teenagers’ mental wellbeing? (see Patel, et al. 2007).

Bourdieu offers the conceptual framework of ‘habitus’ with which to frame my analysis as well as a vocabulary, via his notions of capital, with which to articulate that analysis. Furthermore, Bourdieu allows ‘taken for granted’ knowledge to be challenged via notions of ‘misrecognition’, further enhancing the analysis, and allows a critical stance to be taken towards the political context of neoliberalism’s crises and associated vocabulary.

## **Summary**

In this section, I have reflected upon the notions of three social theorists; Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu. I have done this so that the reader can follow me on the journey of my analysis via the teachers’ lifeworlds within a setting of the public sphere, such that we can reflect on the teachers’ sense of ontological insecurity via a notion of structuration lag. At the same time, this allows me to be critical of misrecognitions within the vocabulary we use and see how this can place us within a habitus which may present a doxaic clash with the current hegemony.

## **3.6 The Process**

Being a phenomenological study, the interviews were transcribed verbatim so that repeated listening could be conducted alongside repeated reading and note taking. Within this process, there were four phenomenological notions to consider (Moustakas, 1994). The first was for me to contemplate my own viewpoints and assumptions so that the data would not be interpreted in any prejudicial way. Secondly, the component parts

of the data, the transcripts and the recordings were considered for meaning. It was here that the essences of the phenomenon were located, contextualised and analysed. The data was then clustered and irrelevant data set aside. Thirdly, I sought the structural components, the conditions and essences that make up the experiences of teachers.

I synthesised my findings, which involved intuitive reflection on the components found during the first three phases, building a synthesis of contexts and experience in order to locate meaning and essences of those experiences. I adopted a holistic approach to my thematic analysis, which portrayed the phrases used to make meaning and select what is essential or revealed by the text. I did this by examining the text line by line and simultaneously listening word for word. It is the focus on these dominant themes in the teachers' discourse that provided the account of this research, but it was not done via any linguistic organisation – rather by analysing the naturally occurring speech and its social organisation.

### **3.7 Analytical approach**

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is concerned with the variation within accounts and how this variation can reveal the situation and the function of those accounts. The analytic approach I took is based on the methodology proposed by Potter and Wetherall (1987). This involves two phases; firstly, the search for patterns in the data and secondly the hypothesising of functions and effects. The patterns can be found in the variation in the content or form of the accounts and can be either located as differences between accounts or similarities between accounts. These are both analysed for contextual influences. Whilst attention was paid to the functioning of the language used, it was the analysis of my hypothesising about the functions that formed the foundations of the study. As such, discourses were not just waiting to be discovered, but were an interpretation made by me, the researcher, and are therefore part of a constructive process (Parker and Burman, 1993).

By considering the semi-structured interview using three strands covering teachers' individual histories, their perspectives on their own learning and their perceptions of leadership, I was able to portray both the richness of teachers' thinking as well as the subtlety of their understandings, enabling a full exploration of their lived experience.

### 3.8 Researcher Role

By using a social constructionist methodology' I am putting myself at the centre of the research and therefore it has been necessary for me to explore my own self and identity. As Agar (1980) stated, I will bring with me to the research "my personal baggage by way of growing up in a particular culture, developing personal idiosyncrasies and going through a professional training that conveys a particular set of lenses" (1980, pages 41-42). This necessitates an exploration of my past and the contexts which have shaped me (outlined in Appendix 1). As I have been an active force within the research, shaping it and creating it, I needed to conduct self-scrutiny and involve an element of self-disclosure in order to produce trustworthy writing. I cannot ignore the wounds and scars and "hard won understandings" that are part of my baggage (Ely et al., 1997, page 331). Furthermore, by acknowledging my past and enhancing my understanding of self, I can expose prejudice and potential bias which may emerge in the storytelling of my research. An awareness of such features energises my research and justifies my findings.

When considering the preparation of the interviews, I have had to consider practical aspects such as: the location, the technical support required, any contextual requirements and safety. As well as after the interview, the need to make contemporaneous notes from memory, create transcripts and discuss events with others (Kvale, 1996). However, it is during the interview that my knowledge of self is important, as it is during the interview I listened carefully whilst managing silences, being non-judgemental, allowing the participant to guide the conversation and focus on using language to explore the phenomena. Self-awareness plays its part because of the need to be aware of perceptual filters which are a product of my personal social construction. Because of this, I bore in mind the words of William James, who said:

"Millions of items of the outer order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no interest for me. My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind – without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos" (James, 1950, page 402).

Therefore, my psychological sets, the way I perceive others and make judgements about them, have been reflected upon. Furthermore, my culture as a white, British, able-bodied, middle class male who has worked in many schools for many years has been reflected upon and prejudices, based upon that cultural heritage, challenged.

I have been and continue to be aware of the fortuitous life I have had, both at the start and during the journey, and this has been a continued driver for me as I want the opportunities that I had to be available for everyone else. Not the cultural or religious baggage, but the safe, secure and affirmative upbringing I enjoyed. However, I do have to try to reconcile the love of my schooling and its lack of academic rigour with the current state of schools today. And within that lack of rigour, my continued low self-confidence in all things academic.

During this exploration of self, I have come to realise that I have a lot of baggage and so must tread carefully so as to not falsely interpret or misrepresent the participant's words. I listened, not just for the words I heard but also to the interpretation I place on those words, an interpretation blurred by an 'eyeglass' of my own way of thinking. However, though my interpretations may be blurred, they are also valid and worthy. As a researcher, I have been faithful to the participants' experience and have not cropped it into frames narrowed by my life experience, but add my frame to theirs thereby creating a new, larger frame within which a new picture will illuminate a new perspective.

However, within all the above lies a dilemma; whether it is better to conduct research as an insider with insider knowledge or as an outsider with limited knowledge of the subject area. The notion of reflexivity is crucial to this research. Reflexivity is concerned with circular relations between causes and effects. Potter (1996) states that reflexive descriptions are not just about something but they are doing something, they are involved in that world in some practical way. It was Austin (1962) who first put forward this idea that language is used to do things and so it is a medium of action. However, it is difficult to identify this reflexivity without understanding the context within which the words have been spoken. It is said that philosophers consider meaning to have two elements (Potter, 1996): firstly sense and secondly reference, and both can vary with the occasion that they are used. Therefore, words cannot be seen as sense-making from a giant dictionary but as shared procedures of generating meaning in context (Edwards, 1997).

For me, this is the beauty of language in that we use a relatively small number of words to create a potentially infinite vocabulary. This notion of the meaning of words being dependant on their use is known as indexicality and therefore requires an understanding of that context or occasion when used. As such, in my analysis, I treated utterances as

occasioned and not disembodied from the world; instead I attended to how they are practically involved with the ongoing activities of the education system in England and its schools.

Garfinkel's (1967) work on documentary methods of interpretation also stated that people make sense of the world using background expectations, models and ideas, but went further by suggesting that these are being constantly modified during every encounter, leading to a neverending cyclical building of understanding. For me, this is what Wenger and others express as negotiation in understanding or making sense of our world. Furthermore, Sacks' (1992) work on academic scientists suggested that the researcher should attempt to have as much knowledge as the participants, something often deemed impossible in areas of scientific study – but Sacks (1992) suggests this so that the researcher does not have to take on trust the sensitivities of what has been said.

These points on indexicality and the importance of me as researcher researching an area I have been part of for many years, that of education and schools, supports the notion of me being a researcher and insider, however, it also poses a dilemma. Shapiro (1988) stated that objects have a historically developed familiarity to the extent that a representation is regarded as realistic and because it is so familiar it operates transparently. So did I miss vital phenomena within the discourse that were transparent to me? For example, the education system in England could be likened to the interconnected web of belief as described by the Quine-Duhem thesis, which states that scientific theory, in this case theories about school improvement and performance, are like a stretched fabric or the skin on a drum and this fabric is constantly re-organising its tension and its pattern. The issue here is that I am so embedded within that pattern, I might not be able to see what might be obvious to an outsider looking in from the boundary of this network. This notion was supported by Bloor (1982), in that there will be homologies between the structure of knowledge and the structure of society, so I might not see what is obvious because I am part of a society surrounding my research area. Thus, might my notions of loss of power be a reflection of society's notion of loss of power internationally as our country's collective voice dissipates from our loss of economic presence? This could be seen in the education system as being reflected in such notions as our politicians wanting a 'world class education'.

Therefore the dilemma remains; I need to understand meaning in the discourse indexically but in doing so I might have been blind to issues because of my insider understanding of the educational world's interconnected web of belief. However, it is for this reason I have included the perspectives of Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu. For me, these social theorists offer a safety net as they force a perspective to be taken which is beyond this web of belief.

### 3.9 Reflexivity

As I have said, reflexivity is concerned with circular relations between causes and effects. However, further to Potter's (1996) notions on reflexivity in language use, I feel a fuller discussion about what reflexivity offers to the research process may help me with the dilemma outlined above.

Reflexivity occurs when the observations or actions of observers affect the situations they observe and the observers then reflect on potential differences. Reflexivity has a number of different forms, some of which are relevant to this study, and it is considered by some to be a defining feature of qualitative research (Banister et al., 1994). For me, it is important in my attempts to become aware of my role in the co-construction of knowledge as outlined in previous sections, yet I also used the process of reflexivity to make more explicit how intersubjective elements impact on data collection and analysis. I feel this is a necessary element of my research, as it enhances trustworthiness, making my account more accountable. Consequently, it places me at the centre of the research, not as an explorer discovering new things but as a body within the same sphere as the participants, telling my story amongst theirs. This puts the research in murky territory, as it opens up complex notions of self, personal politics and ideology, which otherwise lie hidden in the writing. Therefore, with reflexivity I see the researcher role not as something to be avoided or neutralised, but as something to welcome into the findings; it will become a central hub of connectivity between each participant. Consequently, subjectivity in my research becomes an opportunity, not a problem (Finlay, 2002).

Reflexivity involves introspection, the examination of my own thoughts and feelings whereby my reflections, emotions and intuitions can be used as part of the narrative (Moustakas, 1994). It may be that insights from this highly personal introspection have created a foundation for more generalised understandings and interpretations. However, it also involved me acknowledging powerful emotional responses I have endured during



a long career in the teaching profession, in particular, my deep-seated loathing of poor leadership; something which led to me being made redundant and knocked me off my trajectory towards headship. For me, the use of reflexivity in my research will give passion to the narrative story if I bring in the powerful emotions I have experienced. What I have found challenging is to use this introspection productively. Although I have had strong negative emotional experiences in the recent past, the previous 27 years have been full of extremely positive experiences, from my dealings with young people, other teachers and other leaders. Likewise, the last three years of writing this thesis. The challenge for me was to bring together a host of introspective thoughts and emotions from throughout my career and to not dwell on more unpleasant aspects. Yet, amongst all these introspective thoughts and feelings, I did not want to lose the narrative of my participants and I certainly did not want to distort any meaning presented by my participants. It is a fine line between navel gazing and productive introspection.

I have already indicated my desire to study the psychological sets of my participants via positioning theory during the interviews. However, this would be a shallow process without my adding to or exploring the nature of the research relationship and how my unconscious processes helped structure these relationships, whereby my own self-reflection in relation to my participants is a partial aim of the narrative (Sartre, 1969). For example, why did the teachers with leadership responsibilities sit opposite me, across the table whilst those without any leadership responsibility chose to sit alongside me? Did I portray something to the leaders that alienated them? Again I must tread carefully, as there are great difficulties in accessing very personal, probably deeply subconscious motivations and the researcher participant relationship is a complex one. As Searle (1999) pointed out, it might require ‘superhuman self-consciousness’, which I do not have.

Reflexivity also helped to enlighten the power relationships between me and the participants. This offered an opportunity for viewing the experiential accounts of the interview within a theoretical framework about the social construction of power within the researcher-participant relationship. For example, through my use of head nodding, ‘umms’ and ‘ahs’, was I colluding with the participants, showing approval and encouraging them to continue along a single narrative of my choosing not theirs? Again, therein lies an issue, as I have to negotiate a self-limit on my reflexivity so as not to shift attention away from any phenomena expressed by the participants towards any

overzealous narcissism. I have had to, once again, find a balance that was right for me and this research.

Despite the potential pitfalls of reflexivity, I believe it helps to resolve the dilemmas outlined above, in that I am an insider writing an insider account; I am a product of the educational establishment and as such, am concerned about not seeing what might be obvious to an outsider. Yet for me, the role of reflexivity is being critical of all my former preconceived educational notions. As Bourdieu argued, social scientists are full of biases, but by becoming reflexive, one can become aware of those biases, thereby creating a more objective science. For Bourdieu, reflexivity is part of the solution not the problem and for me, reflexivity is part of the solution to the dilemmas outlined above.

### **3.10 Description of research method**

#### ***3.10.1 Ethical considerations***

As an educational researcher, I have operated within an ethic of respect for any person involved in my research, treating participants in accordance with BERA Guidelines for Educational Research 2011, paragraph 9. As such, voluntary informed consent was required before the research began (See Appendix 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). I also ensured that interview participants understood the process in which they were to engage and how the findings will be disseminated as outlined by a fair processing notice in Northumbria University Research Ethics and Governance Handbook.

I recognised the right of any participant to withdraw from my research at any time and for any reason. It was discussed with my supervision team that any unexpected detriment to participants arising during my research will be brought to the research team's attention and in the unlikely event of upset or disclosure during data collection, I would seek support immediately from the appropriate authorities. Details of locally available counselling services are included in Appendix 11 and were available during the interview in case I felt they were needed. However, this was not required.

I recognised participants' entitlement to privacy and have accorded them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity as far as possible, whilst using their transcripts which describe their experiences. I explained to participants that their words will be anonymised but that their experiences will be represented in the findings, so may be

recognisable to them. I initially used a simple numerical system (participant 1, participant 2 etc.) to anonymise participants and a lettering system to anonymise the schools (School A, School B etc.). However, I found this too impersonal as I grew to feel emotionally connected to the participants, so gave them false names. I also ensured that other organisational specific language was changed, such as room numbers, codes and other organisational words and phrases.

I understood that the participants had the right to be protected from any risk of psychological harm. However, I was aware that during the interview stage, I was drawing out experiences which may be sensitive to them. I do have a counselling qualification and so have experience of identifying any early signs of distress. This helped me to be more sensitive towards my participants. I offered the participants the opportunity to be interviewed away from their workplace to help them feel more comfortable during the interview, but all said they were happy to conduct the interviews at their place of work, either in an office or in their classroom.

I was aware that if an illegal act that comes within the scope of the Children Act (2004) or the Terrorism Act (2006) was discussed, then I am required to report it to the police. This did not happen.

I have protected the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring that I conduct my research to the standards outlined in the nine points in paragraph 44 of the BERA guidelines and I will seek to make public my research and communicate my findings in an appropriate way because the messages within this work must be heard.

I have complied with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998) and with the Northumbria University guidelines and will keep research data six years post my PhD, and have kept all electronic data on my U-drive on the university network.

### *3.10.2 How Was the Sample Constructed?*

The sample was constructed by deciding on the general locality of the schools that could be contacted and then worked within. This decision was made for pragmatic reasons, including proximity to local transport hubs. This group of schools was subsequently narrowed by deciding to choose only schools in the Ofsted category of 'good'. This was done to establish some consistency within the cohort or organisations.

There were approximately twenty schools left who were all contacted, at first with an introductory letter left at reception and then a follow up visit to establish whether or not the school was interested in taking part in the research. Only three schools agreed to participate. I then set up a meeting between myself and the head teacher to discuss the nature of the research.

In two schools, I outlined my research and the role of participants during a staff briefing, passing on an invitation letter, consent form and information sheets outlining what the research and their commitment will involve (See Appendix 4, 5, and 6). This resulted in five teachers agreeing to participate, however, one later decided to withdraw. In the third school, a large secondary school, the head teacher suggested I contact a sample of eight members of staff directly. Two teachers agreed to take part and were given the same information sheets mentioned above. Once all six participants had identified themselves, I had a short meeting with them individually to ensure they had adequate information and understood the nature of the research and their involvement in it. This included the participant's time commitment, location and methodologies used to analyse the data.

### *3.10.3 The interviews*

#### *3.9.3.1 Considerations prior to interviewing*

Interviewing is a form of discourse, so I consider that interview discourse is a form of action. As such, the words used were deployed to negotiate and even manipulate the discourse. During the interviews, the participants and I were building a new social world in which we were constantly constructing and re-constructing ourselves to meet the needs of the interview situation (Bruner, 2004). Furthermore, I was aware of both my own and the participant's self-presentation and impression management in that the self I projected affected the way the participants reacted to me and vice-versa (Goffman, 1959). As this is something I was aware of, but possibly not the participant, I was able to be clearer about the self I portrayed, one of a researcher interested in the locally-based practice of the participant as a teacher.

#### *3.10.3.2 Considerations during the interview:*

When listening and responding to the ongoing discourse, I was aware of possible indexical meanings used by the participants in that they use words which have a different meaning within their contextual use. However, I was always able to clarify this

during the interviews and also remained considerate of the negotiation of meaning that took place which was not limited to language and may use non-verbal cues; hence the importance of stage directions added to the transcripts (outlined later).

My role as interviewer was to enable participants to reveal the connection between their identity and their practice. Whilst exploring this relationship, I explored their community membership, their learning trajectory etc., as outlined below and so expected a certain style or type of vocabulary to be used. Whilst I expected certain educational words to be used, I allowed for the personal expression of the participant to shine through and not impose a vocabulary of my own. This was hard given my history, but being aware of the potential problems this may have caused to my findings, helped me to focus on allowing the participants to disclose their reality.

Whilst exploring participants' identities I was aware of the variations found within certain groups that my participants fell into. For example, when interviewing a female school leader, I should be aware of how women leaders tend to downplay their gender identity or how they can adopt masculine styles (Ford, 2006). Other areas considered were the variations between secondary school teachers and primary school teachers, in that secondary teachers' identities are often related to their subject, whereas primary school teachers' identities are often associated with the child.

When exploring this connection and interconnectivity between the participant's identity and their practice, I decided to gather a short personal history from each participant. Whilst exploring their sense of themselves, I also explored whether or not the participants see themselves as an independent self or display any independent self traits. Again, this was useful during the analysis of the participant's discourse. During the interview, an exploration of the participant's interpretations of cultural conventions, both in school and out of school, took place and an exploration of how the participants saw themselves fitting in with these cultural conventions, again this 'flavoured' the interviews during the discourse but also enriched the discourse analysis.

Whilst conducting the interviews I was aware of Higgins' (1998) regulatory focus theory, which states that two systems are at work simultaneously. First, there is a promotional system which is concerned with the participants attaining their hopes and dreams and will explore their aspirations. Secondly, the prevention system, which is concerned about their duties and obligations. I had to maintain a power relationship

which allowed both systems to flow during the interview, because should the participants perceive a power relationship, where I may pass on details of the interview, or that they were too keen to portray themselves as a subordinate worker, they could have simply discussed their duties and obligations to the institution. This did not happen.

During the interviews, I had an outline of topic areas (Appendix 12). However, the semi-structured nature of the interviews meant that there was enough flexibility to deviate from this schedule if other more pertinent issues arose. I used open-ended questions to allow the participants an opportunity to fully develop their understanding and express this as best as they could, which resulted in a free-flowing response to the questions. The interviews were recorded using an electronic device and transcribed afterwards. During the interviews, I endeavoured to use empathic interviewing skills such as active listening, being non-judgemental and showing respect to the participants. I tried to establish a rapport with the participants by smiling, making eye contact and being relaxed. I also tried to avoid using jargon and regularly sought clarification if I did not understand any points the participants were making.

### **3.11 Description of the subjects**

#### ***3.11.1 Before we meet the participants***

Before we meet the participants, I want to briefly outline what others have said about teachers' life histories. Day and Gu (2010) identified teachers' 'life phases' to distinguish between their career paths. Teachers' professional life phases, according to Day (2012), can be divided into *length of service experience*, in that: in the first years of teaching, the concern is with commitment through support and challenge, whereas years 4-7 is concerned with identity and efficacy in the classroom through three other phases before reaching the 31 years plus phase, which concerns sustaining motivation and looking to retire. For me, Day's professional learning phases are a blunt characterisation bordering on stereotypes. Although Day admits that teachers move in and out of different phases due to personal history, psychological, social, and systemic change factors, I think a pen portrait of the participants will better enable the reader to engage with what they say. Despite this, I have categorised the participants below according to Day's phases just to add another level to the pen portraits.

Table 1: Professional Life Phases of the Participants

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Participant</b>
0-3 years - Commitment: Support and Challenge	
4-7 years - Identity and Efficacy in the Classroom	
8-15 years – Managing Changes in Role and Identity: Growing Tensions and Transitions	<b><i>Oscar, Betty, Kelvin</i></b>
16-23 years – Work-Life Tensions: Challenges to Motivation and Commitment	<b><i>Wendy</i></b>
24-30 Years – Challenges to Sustaining Motivation	<b><i>Theresa, Me</i></b>
31 + years – Sustaining/Declining Motivation, Ability to Cope with Change, Looking to Retire	<b><i>Lewis</i></b>

Day's categories should be viewed with caution, especially when considering notions of teachers' autonomy. As Pearson and Hall (1993) suggested, there was no link between this and their length of service, whilst Jiang and May (2012) found that there was a link. It is worth noting that none of my participants fit into the early career stages and as such, may only reflect the perspectives of those teachers who began their career in the pre-performative era (Troman, 2008). Furthermore, it is worth considering Day's other notions around the importance he places on teachers' passion for the role, in that he regards passion as a key element for teachers to maintain their commitment, their personal well-being and their effectiveness. The reason this is relevant here is because Day acknowledges that this passion can wax and wane during a teachers' life cycle, something we may need to consider whilst we hear what the participants say. Moreover, Huberman (1995, page 196) said that teachers' careers are filled with "plateaux,

discontinuities, regressions, spurts and deadlines”, which for me suggests that any attempt to categorise these teachers would be pointless and unproductive. What we need to do is hear what they have to say. It should also be noted that they all work in schools which serve disadvantaged communities, which according to Tonnie (2001, from Day 2012, page 27) requires them to have “reservoirs of resilience” to meet the persistent challenge that they are faced with in terms of their relational ties with their pupils.

Finally, I have added a pen portrait of myself with further details in Appendix 1, so the reader can reflect on my interpretations and analysis, knowing where I am coming from and so contextualising my comments.

### *3.11.1 The Participant's School*

The participants' schools consist of a primary school, a middle school and a secondary school. The schools are all state maintained and are part of a local learning trust, and so none of them are academies. All the schools are judged to be 'good' by Ofsted.

The primary school is a larger than average-sized primary school and the proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is higher than the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by SEN support or with EHC plans is average and the school meets the current floor standards.

The middle school, which has pupils in Years 5 to 8, is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school, but large compared to a primary school, with approximately 500 pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average, but the school has a catchment with areas of severe deprivation. The proportion of pupils who have SEN support or EHC plans is above the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards.

The secondary school is much larger than the average sized secondary school. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The vast majority of students are of white British heritage, with a below average proportion from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who have SEN support and EHC plans is above the national average.



### 3.12 Meet the participants

#### 3.12.1 Me

Before becoming a teacher, I had a variety of jobs mostly in the horticultural business. I am 52 and I have been a teacher for 27 years. I teach a variety of subjects mainly within the humanities, such as geography and history, but I have taught maths and English, as well as teaching English as a second language whilst working abroad in Papua New Guinea and Malawi. The schools I have taught in served disadvantaged communities. I have had a variety of responsibilities, for example, careers education, running a small centre for disaffected pupils, being a curriculum leader and assistant head teacher. Whilst in my 'leadership' roles, I completed my NPQH and was heavily involved with mentoring programmes such as *Leading from the Middle* and *Leadership Pathways*. In 2012, I was fortunate enough to take a redundancy deal and begin a career developing my skills as a researcher, completing my M.Ed. in 2012, then working on my doctorate, whilst also doing small amounts of part-time teaching.

#### 3.12.2 Wendy

Wendy has been a teacher for 19 years and has only taught in the one secondary school. She trained as a teacher directly after university and has a responsibility for the environmental awards within her school. She teaches mostly vocational subjects to year 12 and 13 pupils. Her school serves a disadvantaged community. Wendy is in her early 40s and has three children, the oldest of which is about to attend secondary school.

#### 3.12.3 Betty

Betty worked in a variety of jobs before she became a teacher and has been teaching for over 10 years. Betty has taught in a variety of schools, mostly primary schools. In her current primary school, she is curriculum leader for English and works four days a week. Betty has a grown up family.

#### 3.12.4 Theresa

Theresa has been teaching for over 25 years. Her family took precedence over her career and she has only been a full time teacher in the past 15 years, after her family had grown up. Theresa has taught in primary and secondary schools, and is currently curriculum leader for Modern Foreign Languages in her middle school.

### **3.12.5 Kelvin**

Kelvin came to teaching later in life and has taught English as a second language in Asian countries. He has taught ICT for just over 10 years, mainly in the same middle school, where he is now curriculum lead for ICT. Kelvin has a family which includes two children in the same school he teaches at.

### **3.12.6 Lewis**

Lewis has been a PE teacher for over 30 years and is in his final few years before retirement. He has been in the same primary school for over 10 years and joined the school as the deputy head teacher. He has an older family and his daughter is now training to become a teacher.

### **3.12.7 Oscar**

Oscar had several jobs before becoming a teacher, including journalism. He joined his secondary school 10 years ago and this is the only school he has taught in. Oscar is a history teacher and has recently become the Head of Humanities. Oscar has also decided to access 'leadership' training in the hope that he will one day be able to join the leadership team. Oscar is in his late 30s.

## **3.13 A description of the method used to locate the themes**

I did not use a single lens to help me illuminate the words; this enabled me to focus the rather broad generic social constructionist lens. I did this firstly by focusing my thinking on Wenger's (1998) notion of social learning within a community of practice. Secondly, I focused on notions of power (Foucault, 1980, Lukes, 1974, Harre, 1970) and finally on notions of positioning theory after Harre (1999). However, again following the hermeneutic theme, these three ways of thinking about the text of the transcript and voice of the interviewees was re-focused further. When listening and reading using the notion of learning within a community of practice to focus my thoughts, I understood the words in terms of their historical, cultural and social aspects of the teachers' lived experience. When listening and reading, using the notion of power to focus my thoughts, I understood the words in terms of macro-power, referring to out of school power via the government and its agencies such as Ofsted; meso-power, in terms of the local hierarchy of power such as a local authority, head teacher or leadership team; and in terms of micro-power, which I have used to consider how teachers use their individual power. During the listening and reading of the third section, I used Harre's theory of

positioning to help break down my thinking in terms of how teachers consider themselves in terms of their own understandings of their rights and duties of their role. This third element is a nod to the significance of the interactive nature of the interview process, in that it is active, dynamic and constructive. Therefore, what emerges is shaped by what both the interviewee and interviewer bring in terms of norms, rules, rights and duties. I linked this section with Goffman's notion of performance (1959) and footing (1981), but have found he offers too static an understanding to enable an in-depth analysis, as does *role theory*, and so included Harre's understanding, as it offers more fluidity as interviewees' notions of their rights and duties in adopting or resisting roles can change during the relatively short period of an interview. Discursively examining how each interviewee expresses their positions allowed me to assess similarities between these position defining beliefs.

This analytic approach allowed me to identify patterns in the form of variability and consistency. I was able to identify differences in both the content and the form of the accounts as well as the features shared by these stories. At the same time, I examined each account for contextual influences. It was the synthesising of the variability and consistency as well as the contextual influences and the resultant hypothesising about the functions that formed the findings of this study.

- i) The first stage was to transcribe the interview data verbatim and add stage directions in order to help others read and understand the speaker's intentions via intonation, use of pauses and emphasis. This was important to complete early in the process to ensure that during the analytical stages of reading, re-reading and listening, none of the speaker's intentions were lost.
- ii) The second stage was to listen to the recording whilst simultaneously reading the transcripts and note taking. This required much pausing and replaying of certain sections to fully appreciate what was being said and why. The first series of note taking was based on descriptive comments under the headings:
  - a. Key objects
  - b. Events
  - c. Experiences

- d. Assumptions
- e. Explanations
- f. Emotional responses

It was, after considering the notes from this stage that early themes began to emerge. However, this analysis only remained at the linguistic expression stage and required me to “go through the everyday linguistic expressions to the reality they describe” (Polkinghorne, 1989, in Valle and Halling, 2013, page 55).

iii) The third stage involved reading and re-reading, again whilst listening, and simultaneously note taking under the headings:

- a. Community of Practice:
  - i. Culture, history and social
  - ii. Teachers as learners in a social environment
  - iii. Rights and duties
- b. Power:
  - i. Macro
  - ii. Meso (organisational)
  - iii. Micro
- c. Positioning
  - i. Intentional
  - ii. Forced
  - iii. Normative

This enabled me to delve into the psychological dynamics of what my participants were saying. This process, described by Polkinghorne (ibid) as both reflective and imaginative variation, led to the first tentative themes, such as: *resilient pupils, gender differences, hoop-jumping, and a down-market profession*. Yet I still felt that I hadn’t

truly accessed their meaningful experiences and no matter how many times I listened to and re-read the transcripts, I wasn't getting any further towards consolidating the themes; in fact, just the opposite – the themes began to grow in number and not merge. At this stage, I was lost.

- iv) I turned to a method commonly associated with situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) and attempted to locate my participant's descriptions of their experiences on a 'map' (see Appendix 13). This enabled me to condense the described experiences on one sheet of A3 and link the various themes with my own descriptive comments. Furthermore, it enabled me to view all these 'maps' as one and I began to develop themes across participants.
- v) This stage involved me 'testing' the themes I was developing and included the reflexivity discussed earlier, enabling me to section off chunks of the transcripts rather like Giogi's (1975) 'blocks'. However, again these themes felt cumbersome and too 'blocky' in that my participants' stories did not flow. The themes thus far were:
  - a. Structures
  - b. Curriculum
  - c. Communities of practice
  - d. Teachers' learning
  - e. Managerialisation
  - f. Organisational change
- vi) This stage involved attempting to regain the stories as described by participants, but to do this, I had to find a way to view the blocks I had created as whole. This is why I used a nearby sports hall to place all the block transcripts in one large space in order to find coherent themes. This visualisation involved copious post-it notes of varying colours, but after many days rearranging the texts, the final emergent themes were developed:
  - a. Nostalgia and change

- b. Professional vulnerability
- c. Pedagogy of the impressed (now subsumed into professional vulnerability)
- d. Oppositional positioning
- e. Notions of Human Capital Theory
- f. The imbalance of accountability
- g. A moral and ethical stance

Note: This description of the process does not convey the days, weeks and months of immersion into this data and subsequent confusion; the back and forth of reading and re-reading, of sectioning off and undoing those sections; the mess! And, of course, much reflexivity.

### 3.14 Text descriptions

In the findings section, the participants' and researcher's spoken words are in italics and are transcribed directly from the interview recording. The stage directions describing their tone and pace are also in italics, but are distinguished by being in square brackets in front of the words spoken. For example, "*I don't know [jovial tone, almost laughing] I've never known anybody get sacked*" is a description whereby "I've never known anybody get sacked" is said in a jovial tone, where the participant is almost laughing as she speaks. The words in bold are where the participants have emphasised those words, the description of emphasised comes in square brackets after the word. For example, "*But the **passion** [emphasised] and the **depth** [emphasised] of the answers*" shows the words 'passion' and 'depth' were emphasised by the participant. I have included the researcher's speech to show the nature of the flowing conversation during the interviews and because at times these words are important to understand the participant's meaning.

### Summary

In this chapter, I have described the nature of what I wanted to collect and the analytic techniques used to access the data. I have outlined the notions of three social theorists; Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu, so that the reader can follow the journey of my analysis via the teachers' lifeworlds within a setting of the public sphere. I have

described the considerations I took prior to interview and then described each participant. I have concluded with an outline of the immersive techniques used to analyse the participant's descriptions, such that I feel the reader will have confidence in what I convey. The next chapter draws together my understandings, as outlined in the previous chapters, with the findings from the participants.

## Chapter 4 – Findings

### 4.1 Change - “Nowadays it does not happen like that”

#### Introduction

As a result of the analysis methods described above, it was found that an overwhelming feature of the participants’ dialogue regards *change*. This should be of no surprise, considering all the change outlined within the literature review; however, it is the vehement negativity towards this change which is prodigious. Consequently, in this section, I will focus on change described by the participants. This includes the changing nature of communication within schools and the managerialisation of organisational communication as well as managerialised structures within school that have, for the participants, altered the nature of what it is to be a teacher in 2015. One significant change is described as a one-way, top-down flow of communication leaving teachers with a sense of powerlessness, where they lack an organisational voice; something they describe as being emotionally upsetting. This results in teachers having to have resilience, not only with the rigours of teaching young people, but also to work within organisations that have stunted forms of communication and which have introduced new structures designed for monitoring not communication which not only suppresses organisational dialogue but is seen as forms of oppression, via bureaucratic monitoring.

The response to such a situation is to attempt informal forms of communication and for middle leaders to create a false appearance that two-way forms of communication exist, leading to the pretence of listening to a team. However, an organisation that fails to listen to its members is prone to making poor decisions. Furthermore, this lack of communication raises questions about what the current organisational structures are intended for if not a device to give a community of practice an organisational voice. The increasing nature of hierarchies within school organisations appears to concern monitoring and enforcing the top down communication, not providing a communicative, listening organisation.

Furthermore, participants describe how leadership roles within this managerialised school structure can change individual identities to stop listening to team members, something the participants strongly oppose. For me, this shows a form of identity



change, which involves a notion of doxaic alteration. The participants highlight how these changes can harm the individual (generally the head teacher) involved, such that some leaders turn into the “brutal”, “nightmare boss”. The participants distance themselves from such notions and cling to their notions of leadership as being humane and just. They also describe how they consider leadership being better when it was part of the community of practice. The participants’ communities of practice are considered important in that they include notions of social well-being, but overwhelmingly, the changes described highlight a move from a notion of engaged, supported workers, enjoying collaborative practices to competitive, managerialised practices which are described as devaluing the role of teachers. As such, I perceive a rift being opened up between the belief systems of the teachers and the systems and structures of the organisation.

This concept of managerialised practices is highlighted in comments regarding the participants’ recollections of their early teacher learning experiences such as being “thrown in at the deep end” rather than being given a managerialised “standards” form of learning. Furthermore, their current notions of professional learning accept the need to learn due to constant change, but that their professional learning is directed or dictated to them and is therefore not catering for their individual needs or their intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, this notion of “in-house CPD” is considered weak, because it concerns organisational goals not individual ones, and the audience for these “sessions” often knows more than the “sage on the stage”. Moreover, teachers’ life cycles (Day and Gu, 2010) may play a part in the participation in CPD; as teachers reach the end of their life cycle, they may not look for that development, whilst those on a ‘leadership’ trajectory may be offered more personalised development.

Finally, despite communities of practice being valued for social well-being, the notion of border encounters is discussed by participants, who note that although these border encounters have been worsened by changes in structure and practice, schools without these opportunities must struggle within their “silos”. These border encounters have generally worsened because of their formalised structure; again, the participants describe a notion of the managerialisation of communities of practice lessening any positive impacts.

#### 4.2.1 Change - Organisational communication

In the first section, I probe Wendy regarding the flow of organisational communication to see whether she perceives her voice as part of the organisation and therefore part of the organisational community of practice. Wendy is disdainful regarding how she perceives the flow of organisational communication, in that her voice in meetings is not recognised by the hierarchy above, unless there is something “that’s been asked for”, leaving her with a sense of not being involved in the community of practice (Printy, 2008).

When I asked her: *“when you have a curriculum meeting and you’ve decided something, where do your minutes and... is there a cycle?”*

She replies *“Nowhere. [overlapping, low volume, disappointed tone]”*

I’m surprised and repeat her words *“They go nowhere. Just within the department.”*

And she agrees *“[loud fast pace] Yes.”*

I probe further *“So no senior...?”*

She concludes *“[fast pace] Unless it’s something that’s been asked for [slow pace] by senior leaders.”*

For me, this indicates an organisational structure that acknowledges the need for meetings with agendas and minutes, but fails to see the importance of the flow of communication as a two way process necessary for an informed community of practice in that the two-way flow informs leadership practice and vice-versa, undermining Wenger’s notion of the importance of participation (1989). Wendy’s point is further emphasised by ending with “unless it’s something that’s been asked for”, which for me clearly indicates a flow of communication from the top down only; a one-way flow of communication. This leaves Wendy with a sense of powerlessness and detachment from the organisational structure, such that what she is describing is a change to a suppressive organisation, one that has changed its structures to prevent dialogue.

Wendy tries to articulate her responses to this powerlessness by discussing a method of communication she uses to extend her voice beyond the formal nature of meetings. She discusses the notion of what she calls “whingers and moaners”, in that it is this group of staff who object to an organisational change that can influence that change in so far as

some of the rules are removed. However this is certainly not negotiation of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Wendy says *“But I think that they announced **that** [emphasised] at a briefing. That, that had been taken away now. But I think it was **because** [emphasised] quite a few of us... [trails off]”*

I clarify *“Oh right, it’s been taken away now. Oh, right.”*

Wendy confirms *“Yes. That rule has been taken away, yes.”*

Wendy describes how negotiation within her community of practice currently takes place in an informal setting as opposed to a formal setting such as a meeting; something which used to happen but not any longer. This change again describes the loss of a two-way flow of communication and has been replaced with a top-down one-way flow. It is this lack of communication within Wendy’s community of practice which forces her to use her informal *whinging and moaning*. Wendy clarifies this when I probe further:

*“Right, okay. So... Right. And that’s not on an agenda; that’s not in a meeting; that’s just... there they are in the corridor...”*

Wendy responds *“Yes. [emphasised] [faster pace and higher volume] That’s the difference. Yes. [usual pace and tone] Whereas it used to be at a meeting: [as if spoken by another] ‘What do you think about, I don’t know, changing the school uniform to have no ties?’ Right? And everybody discusses it, yeah, it’s a good idea, yeah, because all we’re doing is nagging kids about ties and actually, that’s not important and... blar, blar, blar, [as if spoken by another]. ‘Yes okay, good idea, let’s do that’. Next year: [low volume and in another’s voice] ‘There are no more ties’.”*

Wendy elaborates on this difference with significant signs of irritation in that no consultation prior to a decision takes place, leading to frustrating consequences and the need for people to “whine”.

Wendy begins *“Whereas nowadays, it does not happen like that. Nowadays, it’s er, [pause] somebody goes ‘I think that students should not be allowed to wear leggings’ so an SLT person decides that and sends out an email and says: students are no longer allowed to wear leggings and we all go: [high pitched inquisitive voice] ‘Oh really? Why’s that, then?’ [slower pace] and then we have a battle with our kids and then we*

*have a whinge about that to somebody else on the senior leadership team and then maybe six months later, when 12 other people have had a whine to people on the senior leadership team, it goes away.”*

Whilst Wendy is describing a success, as she perceives it, as the new rule has been taken away, she shows her irritation with the current system of organisational communication by stating that she gets frustrated when an “SLT person” asks for something, emphasising the hierarchical nature of the flow of communication. She also shows irritation for the chosen method of that request, in that it was not in a formal meeting but simply via sending “out an email”, suggesting that no further discussion will take place, and emphasising the blocking of further discussion.

#### **4.2.2 Organisation communication change - Oscar**

Oscar describes what he perceives as organisational dysfunction associated with communication in that, for him, there appears to be an inverse correlation between when he wants consultation to take place and when he is content just to be told what to do by leadership, contrary to Coburn’s notion of leadership aligning the accountability with staff (2001). This indicates a disharmony between Oscar and the organisational communication systems, especially in terms of Oscar’s perception that he has a limited voice within the organisation.

He begins *“Quite often actually we, there’ll be consultation where people [pause showing care in his speech as this area is controversial] don’t really want [us] to have a say or contribute ideas and sometimes there [quickens pace] will not be consultation offered and people will want to have a say. Strangely enough I think there is an inverse relationship between the two, ha, ha; [laughter emphasising the irony] [next section said in a jovial, cheeky manner with a wry smile] I think the very things we are consulted about sometimes are the things that people would rather be told this is what you are going to do.”*

Furthermore, Oscar feels that negotiation is limited in that he is often “told” what to do.

*“Erm, quite often what we will try and do is we will try and say ‘well, look, this is what the school is doing; this is what we have been told to do’.”*

Oscar’s comments appear to support those of Wendy in that the current organisational structures of communication within schools are not associated with a structured

community of practice but are designed as a hierarchical, one-way flow of communication from the top down. This causes both Oscar and Wendy to have a sense of voicelessness and therefore powerlessness within the organisation, and indicates for me a managerialised notion of communication rather than one which supports community communication. Therefore this shift in organisational communication is crushing community cohesion and does not represent an organisation that is working together (Jarvis, 2004).

#### 4.2.3 Leadership - Middle leaders model practice

Oscar, later in the interview, describes how he feels that an “inclusive” working environment is necessary for others to do a “good job for you”. He considers that his team needs to feel that they have been listened to, but offers no examples of consultation. This left me with the impression that he was satisfied for his team just to *feel* being listened to and not actually to *be* listened to. Oscar acknowledges that he has limited “power” as a middle leader, but appears to be modelling what is being done to him by treating his own colleagues in a similar way.

He says *“I would say that **really** [‘really’ is emphasised by pace and volume] you can’t expect people to rally around and cover for you and support you unless [pause as if to think] they are part of some inclusive experience in the work place.”*

And later continues *“Erm, if people believe [pause as if to think] that you at least take their views into consideration and have listened to them.”*

But he does acknowledge his own limitations *“Whether you can do something about it or not as a middle leader, I think people are fairly, [pause and cough, pace quickens] people tend to be fairly realistic, erm, [begins with jovial tone to avoid appearing ‘big headed’] as to how much power I actually do wield, erm, [back to usual way of speaking] but as long as people feel listened to and appreciated, [pace slows and begins earnest tone] I think, you know, that they will do their utmost to do a good job for you.”*

For me, Oscar is demonstrating how he believes an inclusive organisation should be run, with two-way communication, but acknowledges that in the current managerialised school structures, this is unrealistic because the lines of communication to the top hierarchy are non-existent and therefore he is powerless to take his teams’ thoughts, ideas and contributions further up the hierarchy. As such, Oscar’s only response is to

attempt to give his team the notion or “feeling” that they are listened to, which for me is deceptive in that his team may perceive a two-way flow but in reality only a one-way flow of communication exists. I would argue this makes a mockery of minute taking and even participating in meetings, as one-way communication can simply be completed via email. Furthermore, in accepting this situation, that of the suppression of dialogue, Oscar is accepting a form of inequality via his loss of voice as if he is a foot soldier reiterating the messages, half heard and half believed, of his generals.

#### 4.3.1 Leadership - Changes in communication

Wendy has been in the same school for 19 years, starting as an NQT. Since then she has experienced one change of head teacher and many changes in the leadership team.

Wendy’s perception is that since the change of head teacher, things have changed for the worse and describes differences between the “old head” and the “new head”.

Wendy describes how she gets less feedback from meetings and has little input into decisions now compared to before, such that there is now poor decision making. This she describes as being worse, because there is now no discussion followed by feedback then further discussion. She states that once, an organisational structure existed whereby this could happen, but now that structure has gone. Leadership she perceives now “tells us what to do” however, she accepts those decisions, stating “we went okay” and followed the decision, although Illeris (2009) points out that if leadership directs a task, it is typically rejected. Furthermore, whereas previously Wendy would “march off to the old head” because she felt she could approach him and it felt like she was being listened to, now when she tried to do the same with the current head she “got a flea in her ear” and was told “how dare you”.

Wendy begins in a slower pace *“I do feel that we can give less feedback to leadership now than we used to.”*

And continues *“Er, [pause] and that [jovial tone, with a little chuckle] crazy decisions are sometimes made [usual tone] that they haven’t thought through and asked staff about, whereas once upon a time, say... when we had our old head, we would have meetings at which things were **actually discussed** [emphasised] and we have feedback. Like a **staff** [emphasised] meeting, where we went into **sub-groups** [emphasised] and discussed a thing and then fed back to the senior leadership team and I don’t... that **definitely** [emphasised] [lower volume as if trailing off] does not happen anymore.”*

Here, Wendy uses the phrase “asked staff about” which for me indicates the point of discussion within a community of practice, especially as she goes on to say “we would have meetings at which things were actually discussed”. For me, this clearly indicates that in her mind, these discussions are currently not taking place; they are being suppressed, such that she describes an organisation which doesn’t learn (Lave, 2009). However, it is Wendy’s use of emphasised words and how she structures her sentences that also indicate how she feels this change is a regrettable one, not just because it reduces her power within the organisation, but also because the resultant decisions that are being made are inferior, and often retracted. Wendy continues:

*“...but I have a feeling that they are told [as if in another’s voice and in a quick pace] “This is what we’re going to do and this is how we’re going to do it. Off you go and implement it in your departments”, [usual pace] whereas it didn’t used to be like that. In fact, there didn’t even used to be kind of [pause] that middle management layer [pause] I don’t think. Well, of course, there were people who were middle managers, but I think, under the old head, we used to all discuss everything together and feedback maybe through our curriculum leaders.”*

Here, Wendy discusses how the tiers of management have changed over time, indicating that these new layers do not form part of a chain of communication via discussion and feedback, such that she is now “told what to do”. So what are these new chains of middle management for? It appears that the structure for schools has been transformed from structures of communication to help inform practice at a variety of levels into a series of low-trust chains of accountability (Clarke et al., 2000). These extra layers of management are not there to communicate, but are there to monitor and instruct the tier below, so that the hierarchy knows what the lower tiers are doing and report back to the tier above. Therefore, the new managerialised structures perform a twofold function; firstly to suppress discourse and secondly to enhance monitoring.

Wendy emphasises her point about weak decisions being made because of the lack of communication by stating that decisions are made “without considering the outcome”.

She continues *“Like that second row down [pause] and they make decisions without considering the outcome, someone decided that the girls were wearing too much makeup, so someone made a rule that form tutors should be issued with wipes so they*

*can get the girls to wipe off the makeup in the morning. But we went “what? OK” [spoken as if by a collective].”*

Despite Wendy’s notion that the decisions are poorer, she indicates that she tolerates this by saying “we went ‘what okay’”, as if they knew it was a poor decision as soon as it was made. Wendy then goes on to show how she used to directly approach the head teacher if she opposed something.

She says *“But you see, I was constantly marching to the old head’s office and saying...”*

I interrupt *“As well...”*

But Wendy continues *“Yeah, but you could **approach** [emphasised] him; you can’t approach the new head in the same way, ‘cos I’ve tried it once. [pause] I got sent away with a flea in my ear. But at least I’d feel like I’d been listened to. Whereas when I tried it with the new head, he just got angry, [laughter] ha ha. [as if it was the new head teacher speaking] “How dare you say that about us, tra la la la...””*

Wendy is clearly marking a distinction between former styles of leadership, ones which used to be associated with phrases such as ‘an open door policy’, which appeared to encourage dialogue with all tiers of the organisational structure. However, Wendy now faces a very different organisational structure, one that appears not only to reject formal routes of communication as being two-way, but also informal routes in that the organisation cannot be seen to be criticised otherwise it may appear weak. This notion of weakness can be seen in some areas of the literature concerning leadership as mentioned in the literature review concerning Wilshaw’s comments on leadership (Paton, 2013), which for me is a form of suppression, as it blocks discourses and so prevents collective, democratic decision making.

#### **4.3.2 Leadership - Demonstrating the change**

Betty also comments on aspects of leadership and the associated styles of communication, in that she describes a situation she found herself in whereby her head teacher had asked her some “frank” questions to which she gave him frank answers that resulted in him “trying to listen”, but before that putting “his head in his hands” acknowledging the frustration of the head teacher with his own closed style of communication, that excluded others from their community of practice because “it’s not two-way enough”.



Betty begins by describing her relationship with her head teacher *“I had a really good relationship with [name of head teacher] and I think we had a good deal of respect there and... [pause] And I went “Okay, well I’ll tell you then” and I said [conspiratorially spoken as if telling a secret] “It’s the listening. It’s not two-way enough from the staff to the management and erm... [pause]”*

I demonstrate my active listening *“Yeah. [overlapping]”*

*“You know? And that’s when he put his head in his hands and he did it twice [pause] and [pause] he asked me a load... And then he just went for a load of really frank questions and [fast pace] I just gave him frank **answers** [emphasised] [long pause] and then he left. That’s just me being humorous. It was about a year before he left”*

I am nodding to show my understanding as she continues *“So you know, and actually, it was really interesting, ‘cos after that, I did notice, he would walk up and down corridors and he would read the **displays** [emphasised] and I would see him trying to listen. And he’d listen **brilliantly** [emphasised] to the kids. Brilliantly. It was just the staff. And I see why. It’s because you’re **so** [emphasised] busy as a head. You’re just **so** [emphasised] busy. It’s just not... [pause] You know, it’s not the person; it’s the **position** [emphasised].”*

At this point, Betty is indicating that the position of the head teacher was controlling the person, in that the position now requires a managerialised organisation, not a listening one. Later in the interview, Betty discusses the school having to deal with redundancies due to falling pupil numbers and acknowledges that limited communication may have been what was needed, because it “protected” staff from the more unpleasant aspects of a head teacher’s role.

Betty describes what happened *“And he kept that from us; [pause] you know, [pause] he kept a lot of it from us and... [pause] because he was a very good filter. You know, a lot of it we didn’t know, because he just kept it... [pause] he just dealt with it. I’m not talking in a negative way; he dealt with it [pause] and spared us a lot of the [jovial tone] gory detail. You know.”*

Betty appears to condone the lack of communication because of the managerialised nature of headship, indicating that a distance should be kept between teachers and the upper hierarchy, so that when difficult decisions are made, then personal relationships,

built during communication, do not disrupt the process. This could be interpreted as a form of hegemonic entrapment, as if Betty has become a prisoner to that dominant discourse. However, Betty's response to this distancing of the leadership as a notion of an institutional hierarchy demonstrates her desire for a "flat" structure, in that she prefers not to have a large tiered hierarchy, but one with few links and good communication. Here, her sentiment is at odds with the current managerialised way of organising schools in terms of a *tall* hierarchy consisting of numerous low trust chains (Clarke et al., 2000), and begins to show how teachers' thinking about leadership is at odds with the current dominant notions of school structures, a clash of doxa.

As Betty says *"But leadership; I like a nice flat leadership pyramid, really. I'm not into hierarchical stuff."*

For me this opposes Jarvis' (2004) notion of how schools are a workplace society with everyone working for common goals.

#### 4.3.4 Leadership - A change in the person

Kelvin has worked in the same school for the whole of his teaching career and as such, has only experienced one leadership style under a single head teacher for the majority of that time. He had experienced a second head teacher for just a few months before this interview took place. He has worked in other jobs before he became a teacher, but he does not refer to other forms of leadership during the interview.

Kelvin considers the role of the head teacher as a role he would not want and he considers that a leader should be a "friend" and work "together" with the team; that they should be "there for you" and "approachable". Kelvin outlines how he has perceived changes in the leaders he has known, in that they may well begin the role with the best of intentions, but eventually the nature of the role can lead to them being "worn down" to such an extent that those original altruistic intentions also get worn down. Kelvin makes a veiled criticism of his previous head by suggesting that he didn't like having to always present his ideas on paper first, before a discussion could take place.

Kelvin begins *"Yeah, I mean, I think it is... [pause] I mean, I would hate [emphasised] to do the job myself. No way would it interest me at. Erm, but also, in the best [emphasised] world, you've got someone you consider as a friend, you're working with and everyone's sort of coming together. But it's a bit difficult, without [pause] saying*

*too much, I think sometimes you can go in to become a manager with the best intentions and generally get worn down by resistance, and you change as a result of it. You know, I think like policemen, I think every policeman goes in with wanting to do their best.”*

By suggesting that “in the best world”, Kelvin is saying that this currently does not exist but that it would be his ideal situation if the head teacher could be a colleague. As such, he is acknowledging that currently this cannot happen, even if the person wants it to, because the nature of the position changes a person. For me, this is a worrying comment as it suggests that idealistic practitioners avoid the leadership route because they know that the nature of the job role will force that person to act in an unprincipled manner, something Kelvin clearly wants to avoid. It is as if Kelvin believes that the ‘leadership’ route initiates people into new ways of thinking, of doxaic alteration. Yet Kelvin still holds up hope for the new incoming head in that “hopefully the new one will not” change.

He says *“So I think there’s a reasonable... I think there’s a common-sense approach to it, but I think my previous head was worn down a bit with some of the union activity that came into some aspects of it and hopefully the new one will not be, because we are all working together.”*

Kelvin goes on to be critical of his former head teacher in that he was expected to formalise forms of communication before he would be listened to, again indicating a one-way form of communication in a highly managerialised style.

Kelvin describes his frustration *“Sometimes I talk off the top of my head and I like being able to go and do that. With [name of new head teacher], you can talk policy, you can talk more of that, whereas sometimes, on previous regimes, I’d have to go and have everything printed out, you know, read that, read this...”*

For me, this is a form of bureaucratic hoop-jumping with no other intention than to distort the forms of communication and so hinder the two-way flow and again represents a stunted form of community of practice, not negotiation (Wenger and Lave, 1991).

#### **4.3.5 Leadership - Decisions take their toll**

Theresa has had a long teaching career and has worked in a large variety of schools, formerly as a supply teacher due to her family commitments. However, when

interviewed, she had been in the same school for over ten years, but still recalls the events concerning her experiences of leadership before her arrival there.

Theresa describes how she perceives the role of head teacher had “destroyed” a head because of the restructuring he imposed which in turn “killed the school”.

She describes it as “*the restructuring of the school killed the school, really. [pause] And [pause] it had such **massive** [emphasised] implications and consequences and **morale** [emphasised] just plummeted and unfortunately, I don’t think the previous head could ever recover from it.*”

“*Right. [overlapping]*” I interrupt but she continues.

“*It had been **such** [emphasised] an unpopular move and he never really... [pause] [conspiratorial tone] I think that’s why he went early. [usual pace and tone] He could never really recover from that. And it was a shame...*”

Theresa is describing the events that the head teacher had taken to change the school structure from a managerialised but communicative school, to a managerialised monitoring school. The killing of the school was the blocking of the natural organisational communication flows between different team members, which was transformed into a monitoring device resulting in poor morale via suppression, reducing both personal learning and organisational learning (Stoll et al., 2012). Theresa implies that the impact of this change was enough for the head teacher to consider his role as head and to move on.

#### 4.3.6 Leadership Communication - The emotional impact

Later, Theresa describes poor structures for communication in that there was a serious lack of communication regarding a timetable, which was an emotionally disturbing period in her career.

She describes what happened “*...and I was really looking forward to it. [disappointed tone] I got my timetable and [low volume and slow pace] it had all [subject] on it. I **cried, literally** [emphasised] sobbed all weekend [pause] and that was the end of my [subject] career. [She ended the sentence in jovial tone, with laughter, as if to lighten the mood].*”

I prompt her to describe more “*Mmm. And no discussion?*”

She describes how leaders should know better; using a football analogy, she describes how they should know how to “play a team”.

*“No discussion. [pause] I was very very... [pause] I, I was really, really **devastated** [emphasised] and I think the trouble is, [pause] you know, sometimes there are decisions made and [pause] it’s not [pause] a good head. A good head would know the **strengths** [emphasised] and **weaknesses** [emphasised] of his staff and would **play** [emphasised] a team that reflected those.”*

Theresa regularly describes her emotional response to poor forms of communication, concluding that one needs “resilience” to survive leadership, a sort of armour with which to withstand the onslaught of a different doxa, such as when she describes her experiences of talking with leadership members: *“I tried to discuss it with him **again**, [emphasised] because it was very important to me. I take my job **really seriously** [emphasised] and [jovial tone] he just walked away from me. [laughing] [usual pace and tone] So I’ve had some very **negative** [emphasised] experiences and a lot of **lack** [emphasised] of support. I’ve had a lot of **problems** [emphasised] where I haven’t been listened to by management and I haven’t been supported and things haven’t been **resolved** [emphasised]. But [pause] I feel as though I’ve got enough integrity [fast pace] and I’m not saying I’m always right, [usual pace and tone] but I think that I’ve got the resilience and the integrity and **I know why I’m in** [emphasised] teaching.”*

Despite Theresa returning to the person who had communicated with her in an appalling manner, she could not change that decision and so feels powerless and unsupported. However, she makes a distinction between this style of poor communication and her stance in terms of why she is “in teaching”, positioning herself morally away from the over-managerialised, poor communication of her current school structures in the hope that one day her ideal, morally inclusive school structure will emerge. For me, Theresa is articulating her ideological opposition to the changes that have taken place in schools and feels disconnected from the current hegemony but is resolute about her stance. She is describing a clash of lifeworlds; hers, and the current educational hegemony, and because she feels this distinction so painfully it is as if she is at war.

#### **4.3.7 Leadership - Unprincipled and principled**

The concerns regarding the managerialisation of communication leading to poor decision making and a sense of powerlessness is further explored by Betty. The context

for Betty's comments on leadership centre around two separate experiences, "the nightmare boss" and the principled leader. Within her description, she positions herself against an over-managerialisation of teacher monitoring, towards a "humane", collective form of leadership. Betty also adds her personal opinion about her own preferences for a leadership model.

The "nightmare boss" frightened Betty and caused her to leave a position in a school she enjoyed. However, Betty and other colleagues still found ways of subverting this head teacher's control.

As Betty explains *"Er, well from there, I went to... [pause] since I finished my training, they said "we'd like to keep you on as the year [number] teacher", so I was kept on, but I was working for a nightmare boss. She was an absolute... [pause] Er, so I left for my own sense of... [pause] sort of dignity, really. It was... [fast pace] There were some things going on in that school that shouldn't have been going on, [pause] [usual pace] so I got myself out and went on supply."*

For Betty to leave her post and the security of a permanent position shows the strength of feeling she had towards this head teacher. From the pauses in her speech and the changes in pace I have a sense that the situation Betty found herself in was intolerable, not because she was being over-monitored, but because the principles which sustained Betty as a teacher, notions of humane social justice, were not in existence within the leadership of this school. That Betty felt she must leave for her own "dignity" and personal integrity demonstrates clearly how this head teacher did not align accountability with her staff (Coburn, 2001). Here, Betty is articulating the differences she senses between her lifeworld and that of the head teacher's, such that Betty felt she had to retreat from the battlefield of her former school.

Betty continues *"[usual pace and tone] Well the problem with describing my first boss is: you would just think [slow pace to emphasise the point] I was just massively exaggerating. [usual pace] Because she was a complete walking [pause] **exaggeration**. [emphasised] [pause] Erm, and actually she liked me. [pause] She was **a horrible** [emphasised] bully and she drummed three people out of the profession and she used to **boast** [emphasised] about it: [spoken as if by a mock head teacher] "I've drummed three people out of this profession over the last fifteen years, so don't start..." [usual voice returns] kind of, that sort of thing."*

The notion of drumming “three people out of the profession” is synonymous with the head teacher by-passing the accepted appraisal structures expected within schools and instead using other more subversive strategies of coercive force to manipulate staff. What is most telling for me is that Betty describes the head teacher as boasting about such events, suggesting that that head teacher believed that in acting this way, she was being a good head teacher, when in fact she was appalling Betty and many other teachers within the school. It is here that a distinction can be made between certain forms of leadership within schools, that has embraced and corrupted the forms of monitoring that take place in that they do not monitor with a view to improve practice, but instead to wield a form of unprincipled power over others. Betty describes this unwarranted power as being a “horrible bully”, something that should not be tolerated in any workplace, but it was not the head teacher who left the profession, it was three other teachers. This notion of bullying reminds me of comments made by Wilshaw (Paton, 2013), concerning the need for head teachers to ignore their staff and act as a Clint Eastwood character, something I am sure would resonate with that head teacher, but that Betty would consider morally abhorrent. Here, like Theresa, Betty positions herself as being disconnected ideologically from these forms of leadership and resolutely sticks to her own humane stance, one based on social justice. Again, for me, she is marking out her territory of beliefs and making a distinction between her way of thinking and that of the head teacher.

Despite the fear described by Betty of this head teacher, she also describes how the staff sought to subvert the head’s control via a “little message system”. Furthermore, the monitoring that Betty describes appears to have little to do with the quality of pupil learning.

Betty continues as if it were a joke *“No, because you didn’t know when she was going to come round and what it could be. Was it going to be the milk bottles, or the state of the cloakrooms, or the whatever? So we used to have a little message system, you know. [laughing] We used to say, we need zip wires, to quickly whizz a bottle over to the prefabs, you know... [laughing]”*

The school Betty eventually moved to after experiencing the “nightmare boss” was chosen because of those previous experiences and based on her desire never to work for

a head teacher like that again. Consequently, her next head teacher “healed” her because of his principled and “humane” approach to school leadership.

As Betty describes it *“Er, I [slow pace to emphasise the point] was just frightened, really. [usual pace] But I’m not anymore, ‘cos [name of head teacher] has... working under [name of head teacher] for ten years and now [name of head teacher] of course, have healed [emphasised] me.”*

I interrupt *“Mmm. That’s good. [overlapping]”*

Betty continues *“And I’m now quite normal. [laughter][usual volume] Relatively normal. It was lovely to work for [head teacher], [slow pace] because [head teacher] was just a very, very principled and humane person, erm, and it just [low volume and slow pace to emphasise the point] healed me. Yeah.”*

Betty again makes that distinction between her experiences of principled and unprincipled forms of leadership, such that she describes being “frightened” by the unprincipled head and it took a long time for the principled head to “heal” her. These words remind me of a battle, were she has been injured, not physically but mentally, damaged by a battle of lifeworlds. Although Betty does not describe the forms of monitoring conducted by the humane head teacher, she does describe the experience as being “lovely to work for” suggesting that the forms of monitoring and evaluation that existed were considered by Betty to be fair and based on principle. This supports Woods and Jeffrey’s notion of teachers being autonomous because of their humanism (2004). Therefore, for me, Betty has positioned herself towards a humanistic, morally accountable notion of leadership and organisational control rather than an unknown and unseen form of accountability employed by the bully head teacher. She is describing herself as being aligned with the notion of schools as organisations of moral authority, based on humanistic principles of social justice, not on notions of hierarchical power, based solely of positions within that hierarchy; she is describing a clash of doxa.

#### 4.3.8 Leadership - Humane

Similar to Betty, Lewis acknowledges that he has witnessed “brutal” leadership in his career, as well as leadership notions that he opposed, in that one leader refused to praise anyone whilst he did the opposite. He acknowledges that his current head teacher is a good leader but then damns him with faint praise by saying “his heart is in the right



place”, suggesting that he is well-meaning but perhaps not effective. Lewis suggests that some leaders know about *Investors In People* but do not follow the principles as they are not *investing* in people. Lewis feels that leadership should have a humane element and acknowledges that he leads only via his own moral compass, in that if he does not believe in a certain course of action, he “finds it hard”, suggesting that he would oppose such actions.

Lewis begins “*I’ve, I’ve, [pause] seen some bad leaders. [pause] I’ve seen some... [pause] not particularly with me, [pause] that have tried to lead me in a particular direction, but I’ve, I’ve, I’ve, **heard** [emphasised] of and **witnessed** [emphasised] some **brutal** [emphasised] leaders who are... [pause] who get it **wrong**. [emphasised] I think we’re fortunate here; [pause] we’ve got a leader who is... [pause] [fast pace] his heart’s in the right place and he... [pause]*”

This notion of “brutal” leadership suggests something akin to Betty’s “nightmare boss” and for me includes notions of an overzealous interpretation of leadership power, thus, it is brutish and impacts on teachers negatively. Therefore, it is a notable change that these participants are describing because the change involves the teaching profession, allowing such positions to be taken and to go unchallenged. For me, this illustrates a profession that has been so kowtowed by the current dominant discourse that it is fearful of standing up for itself, and raises questions about how teachers perceive their unions, as they do not turn to these bodies or even discuss any intervention from a union. So for me, they don’t perceive their unions as being able to support them against the ‘nightmare boss’, as such, the unions are perceived to be collaborative with the dominant discourse and not resistant towards it.

Lewis continues “*they’re just, just... [pause] **brutal leadership**, [emphasised] is just wrong in all its... [pause]*”

Here, Lewis clearly shows his opposition to that form of leadership and below shows how he attempted to subvert it, which is laudable, but he did not feel powerful enough to challenge such a leadership approach informally or via his union.

He says “*...her leader never praised her and she said [slow pace] “Therefore I will never praise anybody.” [usual pace] So as a deputy head, I was running around the school praising people, because she couldn’t.*”

#### 4.3.9 Leadership - Powerless middle leaders

Lewis goes on to describe how he has difficulty with his leadership role if he has been asked to lead on an area he isn't ethically aligned to, such that he is demarcating his own lines of battle. Here he describes how he decides what to lead on and what to avoid.

*"I didn't believe in it. But if I **do** [emphasised] believe in it, I'll drag anybody **anywhere**, [emphasised] [pause] but not something I don't believe in. [pause] Erm, [pause] and a lot of the things we get from [pause][lowered volume and slow pace] top down: [fast pace] 'do it this way, do it this way, do it this way...' [pause][usual pace] I find it very hard to sort of follow and become the leader in that situation."*

Lewis's repetition of "do it this way" shows a frustration with his current situation in that he perceives that he is constantly being told what to do from "top down". This frustration for me indicates his perceived powerlessness of his role within the school in that he is no longer an interpreter of change within his school, but is increasingly a simple communicator of change and because he doesn't have control over his work, he feels deprofessionalised (Pearson and Hall, 1993).

Oscar appears to accept the notion "do it this way" as being for the greater good of the organisation, in that some "routines", if not followed, would lead to a situation where "the system will fall apart".

He begins *"Yeah. And actually it's at that point where I think, erm, [long pause, as if thinking] I think this school works quite well in that, you know, [pace quickens as if to bracket off this part of the sentence] there are always something which leadership will want us to do in a certain way, [pace becomes even quicker] though they will be things to do with custom practice and routines, so for example the behaviour ladder was introduced last year."*

"Yeah, yeah." I interrupt, but Oscar continues.

*"It, quite clearly, when you put certain behaviours as certain levels of sanction, unless everybody follows that in that way".*

*"Aha".*

*"Then the system will fall apart".*

“Yeah.” I demonstrate active listening as he continues.

“So, you know, it’s either everyone does it or...”

I fill in a pause “Yeah, especially with behaviour, but yeah.”

He continues “So, with things to do with **routine**. [‘routine’ slowed and emphasised]”

“Aha.”

“And the everyday running of the school.”

“Hmm.”

Oscar concludes “You know, it’s a very much oh “we need to do this” [as if in quotation marks].”

Here, Oscar is describing how schools seek to homologise teacher behaviours for the perceived good of the organisation. Oscar’s tone is as if he is ‘toeing the line’ and not necessarily convinced that this is the best approach. Again, he reminds me of someone repeating orders and not believing in them. Yet it remains debatable whether the sameness of experiences based on formalised routines enhances the pupils’ experiences or simply sanitises them. Moreover, this sameness may be about measuring what is easy to measure not what should be measured, as discussed earlier (Biesta, 2009).

Theresa describes change in some of her experiences early on in her teaching career, where she felt she was well connected to that community of practice because of the reduced managerialised monitoring. Theresa describes how “very positive” this environment made her feel and that because of the collegiality of that community of practice, she “learned lots”. Theresa demonstrates her lack of enthusiasm for her current situation, suggesting that back then, “there was nobody looking over your shoulder”, in that her autonomy was a key part of her professionalism (MacBeath, 2012). This clearly indicates that now she feels there is too much scrutiny and that this over-monitoring negatively impacts on the valuable work of the community, in that she “learned lots” and “people shared” resources.

She begins by saying “There was nobody looking over your shoulder to see what you were doing and [usual pace and tone] it was just a **very positive**, [emphasised] like, I **learned lots** [emphasised] from other people, you know, **people** [emphasised] shared,

*“oh I have done this and this has worked really well and I made this work sheet and I have done this,” [fast pace] so that was really nice.”*

#### **4.4 Changed forms of Learning**

##### **4.4.1 Professional or managerial**

Theresa describes how she perceives substantial changes within her community of practice in that she describes a former situation where she felt included, “trusted” and as an “able professional” (MacBeath, 2012). Theresa reminisces positively about being part of a large department, describing how the office, the geographical space, was a special place, clearly a safe place where she felt valued. She is especially positive about how the others in the department made her feel, in that within that community of practice, between team members, there was “trust”. This is something that draws me back to Foucault’s notions of power, as Theresa’s description is more akin to the community of practice’s ‘conduct of conduct’ (Barry et al., 1996), rather than the current bureaucratic forms of control via monitoring.

Theresa explains, at first with a happy tone *“Well I went in and asked could I do things and they were just, they were really sort of really **happy** [emphasised] and we got on really and that was a very positive **experience**, [emphasised] [pause] and it was lovely because I was part of a department of about eight [pause] and so that was **really** [emphasised] nice, we had a departmental **office**, [emphasised] [pause] erm, [pause] and **again** [emphasised] it was, you were **trusted** [emphasised] that you were a **professional** [emphasised] and that you were **able**. [emphasised]”*

Theresa goes on to describe strong feelings of nostalgia towards former schools when she first started teaching, in that high expectations were not “stated” as in a policy or a “standard”, but were based on the unstated values of those communities of practice, as in the notion of ‘conduct of conduct’ (Barry et al., 1996).

She says *“you know, the dress code of the staff [pause] wasn’t stated but everybody dressed smartly with a jacket [pause], and everybody was expected, the standards were very high, it was modelled, it wasn’t stated, [pause] but you [pause] sort of conformed, and [pause] erm, it was erm very high expectations...”*

Furthermore, it was within these communities of practice that she found opportunities for “a lot of learning”, because the organisational values and expectations were “modelled”, as in a form of non-formal learning (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974).

She continues *“I was very **privileged** [emphasised] in that I worked with three different members of staff over the time that I was there so I was able to, I did a lot of learning on sort of having things **modelled** [emphasised] to me.”*

Here, Theresa is clearly contrasting the desired former way of working, which included a collective and collegial way of working towards common shared goals, was self-monitoring and, whilst it was unstated monitoring, it was clearly a rigorous system, reflecting how communities of practice can be seen as ideal work environments (Boud and Miller, 1996). The contrast being with the situation she describes now, as one where teachers have someone “looking over your shoulder”. Here, Theresa is making a distinction between how she perceives the previous notion of a professional self-monitoring structure, which policed itself via notions of professional behaviour compared to what she experiences now, one of managerialised professionalism, in which teachers are no longer trusted to act in a way that best suits the pupils under their control. This highlights how teachers’ autonomy is now regulated by leadership (Forrester, 2000). It is this fundamental lack of trust which appears to be a *line in the sand* for Theresa, in that without the trust, there is a lack of responsibility and without the responsibility there is no professionalism and therefore, the teaching profession has been deprofessionalised (Pearson and Hall, 1993).

#### **4.4.3 Competitive learning**

Like Betty, Theresa is drawing the distinction between a time when she felt that the community could work together to achieve a common goal, one of excellent teaching, compared to other experiences of when there existed an over-oppressive monitoring structure which stifled that community. What Betty may be describing is an opposition to the notion of competition within our schools, in that teachers are now rated and compared to one another, so that competition pushes teachers to keep resources to themselves and to be professionally selfish rather than generous.

This notion of a formerly trusted profession is taken up by Betty when discussing the changed nature of teacher training. Betty describes her experiences as a trainee teacher,

noting how she was self-taught by “watching” then “having a go”, which then morphed into a full-time practice due to another teacher’s long-term ill health.

After I ask about her own teacher training, she says *“No, [elongated] I taught myself. Largely, I mean, by... [pause][fast pace] I watched teachers for the first week and then the second week, I had a go at starting some plenaries and I had a mentor who was, er, [usual pace] fine as far as she went; certainly very well intentioned and then week three, they said “Oh, [name] has gone off on long term sick; you’re the year [number] teacher” [pause] and [enthusiastic tone] that was it.”*

#### **4.4.4 Learning - Trust**

This is a situation she describes as being positive in that “they closed the door”, implying a lack of monitoring and evaluation of progress on the basis that “cutting your teeth” was a successful learning method. Certainly Betty found it so, because she was “grateful” for the opportunity to make her mistakes while “nobody’s watching”, in that teachers need to be able to experiment without fear of consequence (Huberman, 1995).

Betty says *“Yes. It was very nice **actually**, [emphasised] because they **closed** [emphasised] the door and they said “What you probably need is to cut your teeth behind closed doors” and I [pause] was really grateful for that amount of trust [pause] and autonomy, because you know what your [beginning to laugh, jovial tone] first lessons are like; you’re very glad if nobody’s watching them and, er, yeah.”*

It is here that the notion of trust in Betty’s professional learning links with Theresa’s notions of trust within a former community of practice. Betty trained as a teacher when it could be argued that the managerialisation of teacher training in schools was just beginning, but was not as formalised as in the current accepted practice. This change can be seen as the progress of the neoliberal tectonic pace of change, discussed earlier.

Theresa adds some depth to these thoughts in her comments regarding her own learning opportunities, discussing her early career as a supply teacher. Here too, she suggests that she was “thrown in at the deep end”, but was indeed successful and continuously asked back by head teachers. She found this a very “wonderful” experience, something which gave her “confidence”, especially as it was a school she considered to be “well run” and “well organised” with “standards”, by which she means that the expectations

of the school on both pupils and staff were high, not via notions of bureaucratic monitoring but via notions of expected conduct.

Theresa describes her own experiences “...and so I was sort of thrown in at the deep end, I am primary and secondary trained, but I got stuck in at primary, I did several days, probably about a week and a half supply for him, because obviously he had had me in the first day and he was on the phone the [jovial tone] second day, the third day, ha, ha [laughter] and I went in for virtually every day, [usual pace and tone] but I was slotted into different areas, [pause] and, [pause] erm, that was a wonderful experience [slow pace] because it gave me the confidence, [pause] it happened to be a school [pause] which was very well run, very well organised, [usual pace and tone] in fact, it had standards”.

Later in the conversation, Theresa once again discusses her early career and describes being “thrown in at the deep end”, where she “learnt on the job” (Huberman, 1995), something she describes as having given her a “good grounding in primary”, meaning an excellent start in learning the practice of becoming a primary school teacher.

She adds “And I was literally just thrown in at the deep end and [usual pace and tone] I learnt on the job so I had a very good grounding in primary, [pause] erm, [pause] and worked really well.”

Theresa goes on to describe her movement from year group to year group, but concludes by stating that it was her working with the variety of other teachers and other groups which “really helped” her to learn, supporting Carr and Kemmis’ notion that good teachers plan and observe collectively (1986).

She says “I started off with one teacher for a term and then moved into the next year group and was a whole year with another teacher, and then moved into another year group and I think was two terms with another member of staff, so, [pause] working closely [pause] with other teachers [pause] really helped me to learn.”

Theresa concludes these comments with a commonly held construct, in that these various learning experiences enabled her to “survive” the classroom, as if the classroom were some sort of jungle and that classroom management techniques had to be mastered, otherwise “they” (the pupils) would “make mincemeat of you”, meaning that they

would disrupt the lesson showing that her classroom management techniques were found wanting.

She says *“So that was really good, but you know, [pause] you learn so much because you either **survive** [emphasised] or they make **mincemeat** [emphasised] of you.”*

#### **4.4.5 Learning - Collegial support**

Wendy also considers the period when she began her teaching career and contrasts the situation then with what is expected now. She describes how in the past you had to “rely on colleagues” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986), whereas her perception is that more recently, new teachers have an induction day and receive a school handbook.

Saying *“I think it’s difficult when you come in as a new teacher, because they don’t know you, erm, you don’t know the way things are and... I don’t know... How do you pick up things? I don’t know. Erm... Like, the craft of teaching?”*

I attempt to clarify *“Well, and who you report stuff to and...”*

Wendy continues *“Yeah. No, you don’t know any of that, do you? You just have to rely on colleagues and... **Colleagues** [emphasised] and what have you.”*

*“Right.”* I say to show understanding and she continues, questioning her own thoughts.

*“Erm, I don’t know. God, how do you pick that stuff up? Yeah, because then, you were just thrown straight in. Nowadays, you have a... like an introduction day, with like, school procedures and here’s the handbook and... I think I was posted out a handbook before we started, but... I didn’t look at it, no. Exactly. Erm...”*

Again, it is noticeable that Wendy states “you were just thrown straight in”, implying a ‘baptism of fire’ form of learning (Huberman, 1995), compared to a more managerialised notion. Kelvin supports this change in teacher training, something he describes as the “theory”, but for me, his notion of theory is not educational theory but the current standards student teachers must comply to. He does support the notion of being “thrown in at the deep end”, saying he tells his student teachers to “learn from your mistakes”.

To be precise, he says *“Whenever I had my students, I said “You know, you’re going to learn by your mistakes”. [pause] You know? It’s all about standing at the front of a*



*class and delivering a lesson plan, knowing your objectives, knowing where you're going. But at the same time, be flexible. Things are changing, [pause] whereas they seem a bit more bogged down by **theory** [emphasised] now and...*”

#### **4.4.6 Learning - Managerialised thinking of the young**

Kelvin notes a salient point regarding the managerialisation of society in general having changed, in that younger people will have experienced a managerialised form of education as they have grown up and are therefore used to “the modern sorts of standards”. Kelvin suggests that this may suit the “younger teacher”, whilst the more mature student teachers have the “confidence that they think they can deliver lessons without having to do the things”. The “things” described being the meeting of the student teacher standards. This further supports earlier notions of the managerialisation of teaching and schools, not only of the student teachers, but of the pupils coming through our education system, and certainly supports the notion that teachers’ autonomy is now regulated by leadership (Forrester, 2000).

As Kelvin describes it “*So I **don't know**. [emphasised] I mean I **think** [emphasised] it suits some people and not others. You know, I think people are coming into teaching now, in their 20s might find it easier to work through the modern sort of standards. Whereas...*”

To fill the pause, I say “*Right. 'Cos they've come through that process, as kids. Yeah.*”

Kelvin continues “*And maybe they've never left the process, either, whereas I've had a few mature students, like 30s and 40s and they find it more difficult, because they have some **confidence** [emphasised] that they think they can deliver lessons without having to [pause] do the things, so I think it suits the **younger** [emphasised] teacher more than the more mature teacher.*”

This concern regarding the managerialisation of student teacher learning continues as a concern when the participants discuss their current professional learning. The participants describe changes in their own professional learning, in that there is a clear understanding that there exists a constant sense of change and that learning has to deal with such change, so involves regular professional development. However, the nature of that development is expressed as being of concern, in that it is over-managerialised and undemocratic, and meets neither the needs of, nor the ideals of, teachers. Moreover, this

managerialisation narrows teachers' outlooks and discourages meaningful engagement in that development. Teachers' life cycles (Day and Gu, 2010) may be an important factor regarding the engagement or not with development opportunities – some “never bother”, whilst others perceive “plenty of encouragement to go on external CPD”, despite there being a compelling case for CPD (Little, 2006).

#### **4.4.7 Learning - Poor forms of andragogy**

Lewis highlights how teachers acknowledge the constant need to learn in order to meet the challenges of constant change in that “everyday there's something new”.

He says “**Every day**, [emphasised] [pause] there's **something new**, [emphasised] whether it be [pause] how you teach Maths and English, how you teach something in Physical Education; there's technology to be grasped with; there's different teaching styles... [pause]”. This emphasises the constant and continuing nature of change imposed on schools (Hirsch, 2005).

Oscar raises concerns over some learning opportunities experienced in his school, because the approach has been to deliver undifferentiated adult learning sessions which do not meet his needs or that of his team. He goes on to suggest that he does things differently in his own area and will differentiate learning, although he does not provide any examples of this. However, Oscar is clear that he has a vision for what the organisation should do in order to improve the current practice and he articulates this by describing his preferred model.

He says “So for example, I'm involved in the SEND group, this year and there are one-off individual [sessions] as well, where it might be [as if in quotations] ‘here's a new piece of technology; come along if you want to find out how to use it’. Erm, in Humanities, because we do get curriculum area [sessions] time, I [slower pace now, as if conspiratorial] try and run those sessions much more in the spirit of a teaching and learning community. [usual pace and tone] I think in the whole school ones, we're still very much in the developmental process whereby we're introducing the idea that Tuesday afternoon's going to be for CPD. Eventually, we're getting to the point where I guess, where the teaching and learning communities are communities of teaching and learning, rather than hour long in set sessions. [moves to a faster pace] I think there's a difference.”

Here the “difference” that Oscar describes is one of who is deciding on the topic of the “sessions”, such that he suggests the choice is currently not a community choice but a decision from high up in the school hierarchy. Thus, Oscar is describing his dissonance with this current managerialisation of his learning opportunities and showing how, idealistically, he would prefer to engage with his learning. He sees his professionalism linked to his freedom to think (Hoyle and Wallace, 2009).

He continues *“I think the teaching and learning community aspect comes out of the fact that you opt in to something, so you’re choosing to be part of the community, but then, for me, [‘for me’ are emphasised by reducing volume and slowing the pace] the spirit of what teaching and learning communities were originally meant to be is that then, there’s a community involvement, rather than ‘sage on the stage’.*

This notion of “sage on a stage” refers to the speakers or experts that schools bring into the development opportunities to spread a particular piece of information, current expectations or teaching technique. However, as Oscar continues, he suggests that the audience listening to these sages are often more knowledgeable than the sage themselves, therefore wasting the teachers’ time and causing frustration.

*“Because what I’ve found is that sometimes [slowing pace to show care being made in word choice] the level of comfort and expertise over a particular issue and need is sometimes higher in some of the members of the audience than it is in the facilitator. [Pace quickens showing confidence in what he is saying] Now at that point, a pure teaching and learning community would draw on the experiences of those audience experts and then you would have that community approach. We’re not there yet, I don’t think. [Rising in volume towards the end emphasising the end to the sentence, as if a solid conclusion].”*

Oscar’s notion of learning communities is at odds with the over-managerialised development opportunities he has described, but it does highlight his positioning as a collective worker with a belief in the ability of his colleagues as opposed to the current hierarchical undemocratic structure that exists, demonstrating for me the two worlds that currently exist in schools; the lifeworld of the teachers and the lifeworld of management. Oscar further distances himself from this managerialised structure, as he describes what he considers to be a better model of professional development and he displays much enthusiasm for his way of working.

*“Then I think it will be very powerful and very effective and we’ll make people feel **empowered and effective** [‘empowered’ and ‘effective’ are emphasised by volume and slowing pace] within their own roles in school.”*

#### **4.4.8 Learning - A managerialised form**

Betty agrees with Oscar but is more strident in her opposition to the managerialisation of her developmental opportunities. Betty develops her criticism of what went before the new head teacher came, being careful not to lay the blame on one single person and acknowledging that she was “happy” at the school, yet none of the training events “floated her boat” – in other words, suited her professional and developmental circumstances. Betty goes on to suggest this was the case for more than ten years. Furthermore, Betty is highly critical of how the focus of the development was established, noting that it was “at the whim of someone on SLT” who then “marched” the staff along to the event, supporting Illeris’ notion that if leadership attempts to direct learning, it is rejected (2009).

Betty says *“Erm, [long pause, concerned as what is being said may be controversial] I’ve always been very happy and settled at [school], well happy with [school]; not particularly always happy and settled with teaching, but erm, [long pause] er, it just... none of the training events really floated my boat, I would say over the last ten years; they would tend to be more at the whim [pause] of somebody on SLT, the quick affair with [old head] that [name of accelerated learning guru] had, you know, sort of very enamoured with [guru’s name] and we were all sort of marched along and then...”*

Betty develops the notion of being forced to access a chosen form of development to the point where she describes it as “indoctrination”, yet something forgotten in a few days.

She continues *“we all got **carted** [emphasised] down to the [place name] kind of place, [place name], and sort of **indoctrinated** [emphasised] and I was a little bit, you know. I was all these kind of quick fixes. Hardly any content; all presentation and very frothy and you know, [makes noise as if someone preaching] and you’d kind of instantly forgotten it three days later.”*

Within this narrative, Betty denounces managerialised forms of teacher development, emphasising how they attempt to “indoctrinate” via “quick fixes”. Here, she is describing her school’s attempts to meet the needs of outside agencies such as Ofsted in

ways that are fundamentally flawed, as they do not meet the learning and developmental needs of the teachers and consequently these attempts are “instantly forgotten”.

Betty attempts to clarify her understanding of why these events constitute poor learning by describing how she perceives quality development. She makes the point that she connects professional development to personal development, particularly because she is passionate about her personal development, stating: *“I see professional development very much connected to [usual pace] personal development and personal development is a big passion of mine, I think. [slow pace] Erm, and the two do go hand in hand, [pause] because [pause] it’s [pause] a process of engaging with what’s out there [pause]”*

Betty enhances her point by suggesting that without the personal and professional connection, then the development will not engage her (Van der Krogt, 1998).

She says *“I think that the best professional development has been always something that you yourself want to engage and that’s sort of, [pause] You can feel there’s that personal development side **running** [emphasised] on some level and [fast pace] if it does not have that personal development side running at some level, then it’s not going to interest you professionally. That’s how I feel about it.”*

Betty’s linkage of personal and professional development goes some way to help us understand why she is so vehemently opposed to the managerialised, undemocratic learning opportunities she has experienced. For me, she is positioning herself away from the current dominant understanding of improving school performativity via imposed learning events with a view of improving the school’s currency in terms of Ofsted judgements (Broadfoot, 2001). Betty is suggesting that if school leadership paid particular attention to individual personal needs as well as professional needs, then school development needs would also be catered for (Stoll et al., 2012). Ironically, the same notions of differentiation on which much training is focused is not modelled in teachers’ andragogy.

#### **4.4.9 Learning – Continuing professional development**

The above viewpoints may explain why, in Oscar’s opinion, teachers have become reluctant to seek learning opportunities themselves, such that teachers now accept the top-down, managerialised nature of their own developmental and learning needs and do

not perceive the need to engage with other forms of learning. Oscar links his experiences as a line manager with his experiences working with his line manager, suggesting that discussions regarding professional development are now intrinsically linked to “appraisal targets”, linking accountability and performativity (Mahony and Hextall, 2000).

Oscar begins *“So when you say to people: “Right, have you had a look into any courses that you’d like to do?” When you’re talking to people about their appraisal targets, “Have you looked at any courses?”... [spoken as if in mock surprise] “Oh? Oh, can I go on a course?” You know, and sometimes you’ve got to almost encourage people... [change of flow to come back to him] and actually, the same has been recently for me, with the courses to do with senior leadership that I’ve been on, my line manager suggested them and said: “Well, if you’re thinking about this, then we need to get you on some courses”.”*

Oscar suggests that teachers appear reluctant to look out of school for their continual professional development (CPD).

Moreover, when he says *“Erm, I think sometimes, [introduces jovial tone] teachers are a little backward in coming forward”*, he links their reluctance to engage with out of school training with their appraisal targets, in that following an in-house agenda may appear a more secure route, in line with organisational goals and monitoring procedures, rather than unfamiliar outside forms of learning and development. Oscar describes his perceptions of himself as a leader in that he has to “encourage” his team to “think about their own CPD”. Here he then acknowledges that the “in house” CPD may be a form of control in that it “discourages” members from looking beyond the organisation.

He explains *“I do actually find that I have to encourage people to think about their own CPD. I think that the system of in-house CPD is kind of... [pauses, showing care taken in choice of words] not deliberately, but to discourage people from thinking: [spoken as if in quotations] what course am I going to go on this year?”*

Oscar does acknowledge that other reasons have also had a detrimental effect on teachers accessing outside developmental opportunities, such as financial restrictions in schools, saying *“Erm, secondly, there are... it’s... the schools have [long pause] far*

*more financial constraint now than I think they did a while back. Erm and [pace picks up] budgets are tighter and accountability is heightened.”*

As such, Oscar describes changes in the way professional development has moved from accessing outside development towards “in house CPD”, reducing the links between a teacher’s autonomous decision making and their learning (Tennant, 2009). This is done to meet the accountability demands of outside agencies via their notions of performativity, rather than formerly held notions of professional development, aligned to the individual as well as the organisation (Coburn, 2001). It is not just the organisation, as described here by Oscar.

He explains *“Erm, so for that... that’s one of the reasons, but also, as I say, you go back sort of seven or eight years and er, a change in the way that the school viewed teaching and learning; a change in some personnel and key positions. Erm, I think then, we started to look at in-house CPD a lot more, erm and so, for example, now we’re at a point where there’s CPD on for everybody every week.”*

Oscar describes the changes in terms of practicalities, then suggests that this is more “equitable”, as the opportunities for learning are not just for the “chosen ones”, but for everyone.

He outlines his point *“Tuesday afternoon is CPD for everybody. Erm, which I think is far more equitable. It’s far less likely for people to believe that there are certain chosen ones who get to go out on courses and what have you now.”*

#### **4.4.10 Learning - Hierarchical CPD**

Oscar goes on to contradict himself by describing how, as a “leader”, he is now able to access a new stream of development. This may be associated with Oscar’s life cycle as a teacher, as he is in the process of being transformed from a lower tier to a higher one within the school’s hierarchy. It may also be associated with how Oscar is being treated differently since he has shown willingness to move up the school structure and therefore is able to access more specialised development, something that the school itself cannot deliver.

He explains *“Erm, having said that, there’s still plenty of opportunity and plenty of encouragement to go on external CPD, which erm [pause, longer than usual, then pace quickens], is particular to yourself. So for example, when I became curriculum leader,*

*erm, I went on courses which were for people new to the middle leadership role; the leaders' course and now ['now' emphasised by pace and loudness to show current example], because I've expressed an interest in senior leadership, the school had funded me to go on a two-year course. Erm, at different points of the year, for aspiring senior leaders. So... [pauses and changes flow to show gratitude to the school] "*

This appears to suggest that a tiered approach exists to staff development in that there is a structure for generic training with other opportunities focused on individuals' specific needs. Oscar acknowledges this, but rather than recognising it as being less "equitable", he describes his availability of opportunities as "generous" by the school, as if the organisation were acting in an altruistic manner.

He says *"I suppose that's something which is generous, because it's not necessarily going to have an impact in this school, but I'd like to think that the school gets something out of it because of the things that I learn or develop on the course and can apply to my middle leadership role, if you like."*

#### **4.4.11 Learning - In a teachers' lifecycle**

Other issues around professional development and teacher life cycles (Day and Gu, 2010) are demonstrated by Lewis. Lewis has two years before he can retire and alludes to this as something which stops him from accessing new developmental opportunities. If this is the case for all teachers in this section of their life cycle, then it may have serious consequences for how we plan for a national teaching profile in which a significant number of members who are approaching retirement age, yet feel disinclined to access professional development.

Lewis says *"and at my age now, [pause] I never look at [pause] what's on offer for training now. I never bother. If I'm sent to something to do an English and Maths, fine, okay,"*

Lewis admits that he is no longer actively looking for new learning opportunities.

*"Yeah. But I don't actively go to the learning platform and look for [pause] courses and things that I want to do."* This appears to support Day's (2012) notion of the 30 plus years, as Lewis could be described as *looking to retirement*. However, his enthusiasm for meeting the needs of the pupils in other sections of the interview makes me question that this is foremost in his mind.



## 4.5 Communities of practice

### 4.5.1 *The Importance of communities of practice*

Finally, participants described the importance of their communities of practice as well as border encounters (Wenger, 1989) and the effects of changes in terms of reduced support from outside agencies, such as the local authority, and how this staffing change has altered their levels of engagement and perception of the value of this support on their work. Oscar describes how important it is for him to have a team around him, especially when situations don't go to plan, i.e. when an outcome can be positive or negative depending on the "group of people you end up with".

He explains *"The actual fact, quite often, especially when things aren't going according to plan, erm, [pace slows to emphasise point being made] and that's like almost circumstantial isn't it, it depends on which group of people you end up with."*

Oscar continues to describe that when something unforeseen occurs, i.e. "aren't going according to plan", it is at this point that he needs a team. Oscar perceives this as highly important because he describes the feeling of being part of a team when situations have not gone to plan as being a "good day", because his efforts to put them right have "been appreciated".

Oscar continues *"But erm, yeah, that's a good day where I feel like I am part of a team, [slow pace, especially at the end] where I feel like my efforts have been [spoken to standout] appreciated."*

It is this sense of feeling "appreciated" that connects Oscar to his community of practice socially and can make him feel valued, such that even when organisationally the situation may have not "gone according to plan", yet it is the sense of self-worth given to him by his team that creates, in his mind, a "good day".

### 4.5.2 *Communities of practice - Change*

Theresa describes change over time to her community of practice and appears at first to simply describe the expected organisational changes as people grow older and move on, but at the end of the sentence, she adds "we've gone back to more formal meetings now". This suggests that at some time, there were less formal meetings, which I interpret as having a less formal agenda and recording process, such that the agenda is

controlled by those participating in that meeting, rather than a form of hierarchical agenda setting.

I'll let Theresa explain *"Over the years, I've always been part of sort of the pyramid; I've always met up with other [subject area] teachers [pause] and [pause] both... [pause] That has changed over the years. As staff move on and change, we've [pause] got back to [pause] sort of more formal meetings, now. [fast pace] These were all in our own time after school; we used to go to somebody's house for the evening and..."*

Theresa goes on to describe a short period of networking she introduced with colleagues and how positive she felt this way of working was in terms of the relationships she built, and the help and support she was able to offer other members of that community.

She says *"People came to my house for a year after. [pause] The relationships that we made in that two weeks... [pause] I offered... [pause] I had about four people coming; [pause] four or five people coming for fortnightly sessions [pause] and I got a course off [name] for adults [pause] and I worked through it with them and supported them [pause] and helped them and [enthusiastic tone] that was really good. You know?"*

However, Theresa goes on to suggest that because these meetings are now formalised, she does not perceive them as being useful to her, to the extent that she no longer attends them all. Therefore, the correlation that Theresa makes is between her enthusiastic and engaged attendance to less formally organised meetings, compared to her poor attendance at the more formally organised meetings. This is the reverse of the intention of those formalising the meetings now, but for me, links notions of extrinsic and intrinsic forms of motivation whereby the extrinsic are weaker.

She states *"**Latterly**, [emphasised] I haven't gone as **often** [emphasised] to the meetings that have been put on."*

This situation appears to have been exacerbated because the network coordinator, who did appear to motivate Theresa, has retired and not been replaced. Theresa's intonation and her unfinished sentences strongly suggest a deep regret that these changes have taken place.

She says *"but when we had [name], who was employed... [pause] really, he developed and led the primary [subject], [pause] but he was also... [pause] he'd been the head of*

*[subject] at [local school], [pause] so he had a secondary background [pause] and he was very useful at coming into school [pause] and providing training and signposting courses [pause] and there was a lot of enrichment going on and sadly, when he retired, he wasn't replaced, so we're a bit... [pause] At the moment, we haven't...*" She trails off.

Furthermore, these changes are perceived as an increasing problem, as Theresa is concerned that there is currently no one outside of her own organisation that can help support the curriculum area she is passionate about, that there is no one "fighting" her corner.

And says *"So there is nobody overseeing [subject] [pause] and there's nobody fighting the corner for languages."*

Kelvin also describes changes in how he deals with staffing changes. In the past, he would work with local authority advisers, but now he works more closely with his local community of practice in that he has "got together more as faculty leaders", arranging their own meetings. Kelvin does not see this as a negative, suggesting that by bringing together a variety of skills they "share good practice" (Shanefelt et al., 2006).

He says *"I think otherwise you're in danger of existing in silos. We've all got good ideas, but by not sharing them, some will be stronger in databases and some will be stronger in presentation skills. We're both sharing good practice in a way."*

He recognises this change as being potentially beneficial as he has tried to become more "independent". However, this notion of independence is contradictory to his former notion of "working in silos" and for me, shows the move towards schools becoming autonomous bodies independent of one another, which has caused teachers to struggle to know how to access the best forms of professional learning.

As Kelvin says *"they'd come and see us and take our ideas, but we are having to be **more independent** [emphasised] now."*

Lewis picks up on the same theme when discussing similar issues, but raises a point about the changing nature of the current fractionalisation of schools and the individualisation of groups of schools such as academies. Lewis acknowledges that networks are available for him to access in order to develop professionally and he

suggests that at times, these networks are useful to him in his role. Lewis allocates a high importance to forms of networked learning, to such a degree that he ponders how schools without the availability of networks would be able to function well.

Lewis states *“We’ve got an AfL expert, so I’d go direct to her, so there’s networks where you can go. But if at the end of the day there’s a problem, [pause] er, [pause] you can go to the **authority**, [emphasised] which worries me in the case of academies. What do they do?”*

Lewis perceives networks as supportive for him individually, emphasising that there is “always” someone available, such that he perceives the local authority network as a life line, a safety net should he need that support. This may be a result of the closeness a deputy head teacher needs in order to work with the local authority in terms of administrative support, rather than support for his day to day role as a teacher. However, his closing comments indicate a real concern of his, in that those schools, without such a support network and without opportunities for collective professional growth, can only look inward and will therefore become increasingly stagnant.

#### *4.5.3 Communities of practice - Forced*

Theresa also identifies potential for schools to become isolated even when they are organisationally linked within a network. She describes how the reduction in local authority support due to financial changes has been replaced by collaboration with a local ‘high performing school’, reducing the control she has over her learning and making her less engaged (Pearson and Hall, 1993). However, Theresa is dismissive of what has been provided for her; she was “disappointed”. This appears to be because she perceives the focus of the sessions on offer to be biased in favour of the needs of a different school, one which shares the same site as the school providing the sessions and which is also regarded as ‘high performing’.

She attempts to explain *“But actually, when I’ve been to those meetings, I’ve been quite disappointed, because basically, [name of local high performing school] want to collaborate with [name of local high performing school] [usual pace and tone] and they’re not interested. [Pause] You know, [pause] they’re not really interested in what we’re doing, [pause] because there’s a very close partnership between [name of high performing school] and [name of local school], because they’re almost on the **shared site**. [emphasised]”*

This indicates that Theresa's school has been excluded firstly from local authority support due to financial changes, then by the replacement structural changes not meeting her needs, or excluding her because those organising the networking events exclude her school, because it is not categorised as 'high performing'.

### *Summary of the findings from the analysis section on change*

This section has outlined the participants' descriptions of the changing nature of communication within schools and the managerialisation of organisational communication as well as managerialised structures within school. Change is described as a one-way, top-down flow of communication, leaving teachers with a sense of powerlessness, in that their voice is suppressed and so they lack an organisational voice; something they describe as being emotionally upsetting. This results in teachers having to have resilience, not only with the rigours of teaching young people, but also to work within organisations that have stunted forms of communication and which have introduced new structures designed for monitoring, not communication. This not only suppresses organisational dialogue, but is seen as a form of oppression via bureaucratic monitoring.

In response to this situation, the participants describe how they use informal forms of communication and may even deceive others about the existence of a two-way flow of communication. However, it is understood that the one-way flow creates poor organisational decision making. From the participants' perspectives, it appears that the hierarchical organisational systems and structures exist as monitoring and evaluating tools, not as forms of organisational communication. Leadership, within this hierarchical structure, requires a change in identity and can adversely affect people.

The participants outline how important their communities of practice are to them, describing enjoyable, collaborative practices and opposing managerialised, competitive notions. They accept the need for professional learning because of the constant change they experience; however, they reject certain forms of learning, because it serves organisational goals, not personal, professional goals.

Fundamentally, what each participant has done is to position themselves as being opposed to, and disconnected from, the transformation schools have undertaken. They describe these modifications in terms of organisational communication,

managerialisation, monitoring and learning, all of which are discordant views, such that they describe a war of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa.

From my understandings and interpretations of participants' descriptions, I suggest that organisations maintain meeting structures with agendas and minutes (or recommendations), but do not maintain this structure for the purposes of organisational communication; instead, as a system for information gathering or to communicate an instruction. Hence, the flow of communication is weakened or even blocked, and because decision making is confined to the higher tiers of the hierarchy, poorer decisions are made and subsequently withdrawn, with the voices of the participants suitably suppressed.

Communities of practice used to exist within this formal organisational structure, as well as the informal collegial structures, but now they only reside within the informal via a notion of complaining to those higher in the school's hierarchy. Furthermore, there is a perception that there is a pretence of two-way communication existing, in that the organisation only allows the two-way flow when the consequences are of little importance to those involved and not when the consequences are highly important to those involved; this again is a form of suppression.

This leaves people with a sense of voicelessness and a sense that the organisational power resides firmly at the top of the hierarchy. As such, it is perceived as an undemocratic organisation and erodes community cohesion. This is noted as a change in leadership style and is felt more strongly because of the former methods of communication residing more closely to the participant's notion of social justice and democracy, with which they align; not to notions of hierarchical power held in place by managerialised forms of communication.

The notion of hierarchical communication is discussed as something which may be necessary today, because of the difficult decisions that head teachers sometimes have to make, and so a distancing of relationships may be necessary. However, this notion, whilst being understood, is rejected because of the participants' notions of social justice and democracy being more important to them than organisational management. That is why the current structures of low trust chains are rejected in favour of a flat hierarchical structure based on two-way flows of communication.

It is noted that leadership positions can change individual identities and practices, in that moving into leadership alters those formerly held beliefs in social justice and democracy, replacing them with notions of organisational managerialism. So leaders are criticised for decision making based on the needs of the organisation, not on the needs of those serving the organisation and this causes anxiety amongst participants. However, these participants draw on notions of resilience via a robust ethical stance, with which they tolerate managerialised, inhumane leadership and accept it as a part of the job, albeit an unpalatable one. Hence, they recognise their oppression.

The notion of organisational power, brought about by the managerialisation of the role of teachers, is described as homogenising teachers with the result of sanitising the pupil experience. This is deemed to be acceptable because of the socialising potential of consistent teacher behaviours creating consistent pupil behaviours. However, this new managerialism depletes the participant's notions of professional autonomy, whereby they were once trusted to be consistent and trusted to be able to instil positive learning behaviours in their pupils without the monitoring; but they are no longer. This managerialised monitoring is contrasted by notions of professional self-regulation based on a collective understanding of unstated expectations and is recognised as a form of professional oppression.

Furthermore, this monitoring is perceived as impeding pupil learning and reducing the collegiate, sharing nature of the profession by introducing notions of competition in the monitoring devices, which sets one teacher against the other in a game of who can outperform who, so isolating teachers from their colleagues.

This change in the perceived notions of monitoring is highlighted by the contrasting participant experiences of training, in that it was a transformative learning experience, initiated by being 'thrown in at the deep end', compared to a managerialised, systemised and controlled experience today. Consequently, this form of learning is given less value by those participants who were 'thrown in at the deep end'; the new method being understood as bureaucratically demanding but less of a learning experience and so of less value. This is the notion of a competency-based curriculum, compared to a skill-based curriculum, whereby the competency based curriculum is left wanting because it does not concern itself with ethical integrity, via forms of social justice.

Participants express concern regarding their professional development because it is not a result of their desired personal learning outcomes, but materialises from the need to respond to the constant change imposed on them. So this form of continuing professional development is perceived as un-differentiated and regularly irrelevant to the learners, as well as being imposed and therefore undemocratic. The result is a profession disengaged with its own development and left to respond to imposed doctrine, based on short-term institutional goals, which are quickly forgotten, both individually and organisationally, and institutionally. However, a two-tiered approach exists, one associated with teachers' learning to deliver institutional goals and learnt within the organisation, and one associated with the needs of *leaders* to begin to change identities as described above. Such changes take place out of school where new forms of understandings and vocabulary can be explored.

Finally, learning during networking is perceived as being the most engaging when those encounters are informal and driven by those involved. They are considered less engaging when formalised. Hence, the consequences of financial pressures that have reduced network coordination may offer some benefits, but only if power to engage is handed over to those wanting that power. Despite this, networked learning is perceived as positive, yet concerns are raised about the fragmentation of our schools because of government policy, which separates schools into academies, free schools, teaching schools, etc.



## Chapter 5 – Findings - Philosophical and Practice Resistance

### Introduction

In Chapter four, the findings focused on change in the participants' lived experiences, something described as being negative within their lives. The forms of change include managerialised forms of communication, which inhibit their voice and include organisational structures which further limit the participant's ability to engage in an organisational dialogue. This feature of voicelessness has an emotional impact on the participants, such that they describe an oppressive organisational structure. As such, bureaucratic, hierarchical organisations are described as having been designed to monitor performance, not enhance communicative action. These experiences are placed in context by the participants as they describe former experiences of valuable learning and former contributions to organisational development. They also note the impact on individuals that *leadership* roles can have. Finally, border encounters, described by Wenger (1989) as being an essential element of communities of practice, are described as being worsened by the change to managerialised encounters.

While these changes are well described by the participants, what has emerged is not a passive acceptance, but a very direct philosophical opposition to the changes in terms of leadership, assessment, of being bullied and towards the managerialisation of their schools. This strong opposition is justified by the sense of poor accountability measures, which leads to descriptions of professional and personal vulnerability. However, included in their descriptions are what I have described as *weapons*, with which they attempt to resist these features; a practical resistance, and so I am left with an overarching impression that a clash of lifeworlds is taking place between the participants' notions of what education means for them and the types of education that has been imposed on them.

In this section, I will outline what my participants describe via their philosophical and practice resistance. Habermas said that both "lifeworlds and system paradigms are important", which is something clearly demonstrated by my participants, as we shall see. But Habermas went on to add that "the problem is to demonstrate their interconnection" (Habermas, 1976, page 4). So the next section of analysis will focus on the opposition to the nature of change and not just the changes themselves, to understand the

interconnection between lifeworlds and systems paradigms. I will do this firstly by looking at the participant's philosophical resistance and secondly by looking at their practice resistance.

This emergent theme appears directly within participants' descriptions of their lived experiences as an individual alignment against another discourse; a feature I describe as a clash of doxa. I have used the term 'positioning' after Harre and van Langenhove (1999) to show how using the participants' words, they position themselves against a phenomena despite a potential conflict with their role, even their terms of employment. It is a feature of the participants that they openly condemn and oppose certain features of their organisational systems and structures as well as opposing a much broader concept of school influence, that of the government and its associated bureaucracies. In this section, I have used the present tense, which gives a more personal and intimate quality to the descriptions, something I felt necessary because of the personal, heartfelt nature of their descriptions.

### **5.1 Oppositional towards aspects of leadership**

During Wendy's interview, she outlines how a bad day for her would be the completion of a new task given to her by a person hierarchically positioned above her in the organisation. Wendy not only positions herself against having to do the task but also against the structures of the hierarchy; her language is dismissive of those "in charge" by not giving them a title but saying they are in charge of "this, that or the other". Here, I consider Wendy to be oppositional towards elements of leadership within her organisation, after Jarvis (2010).

*As she says "A bad day would be [very long pause, usual pace resumes, slightly jovial, almost tongue in cheek] ... Some new ridiculous thing to fill in, erm, based on information which I've already put on a different database, [pace slow to ensure understanding and emphasise annoyance] from... [long pause] senior management, or the person in charge of [dismissive tone adopted] this, that or the other."*

It is here that Wendy describes that for her, the demands of leadership are flawed because of the over-bureaucratic nature of the demands. This theme flows into an issue of assessment (discussed further in section 5.7) concerning the 'data' captured and regards issues outlined in the literature review about measuring what is easily measured, not what is worth measuring (Biesta, 2009).

Lewis demonstrates an oppositional position towards other leaders he has known, in that he once worked with a person who considered leadership to be about never praising people. As such, because Lewis opposed this notion of leadership, he deliberately acted in the opposite way and praised people.

He says *“We had a teacher here [pause] [conspiratorial tone] perhaps this should be off the record, I’ll leave that up to you, [Note: the teacher isn’t named.] Her leadership style... [pause] her leader never praised her and she said [slow pace] “therefore I will never praise anybody”. [usual pace] So as a deputy head, I was running around the school praising people, because she couldn’t. [long pause]”*

Unlike Wendy, Lewis does not show direct opposition to the current organisational leadership and the same is true for Oscar. This may be because of their job roles being high in the organisational hierarchy, Lewis being a deputy head and Oscar being a head of faculty with intentions to join a leadership team. As such, Oscar does not use his language to suggest he is oppositional towards his organisation, but rather the opposite, as he positions himself as highly supportive. His language for me says more about him modelling what he perceives as ‘leadership’ qualities and how he seeks to position himself as such. Oscar does show his opposition to leadership, but that leadership is from another setting. He describes an encounter when attending an “aspiring leadership course”, where he shows disdain in his language for a head teacher who “didn’t like certain things” and was “on about jargon” when presenting at the course. Oscar explains that he couldn’t see the “purpose” of what the head was saying, especially as he implies the head teacher’s presentation was egotistical. Oscar admits that others around him found the head teacher “inspirational”, but to Oscar he felt that he was “at the emperor’s new clothes unveiling”, suggesting that Oscar could see through all the head teachers’ rhetoric and behind it; he saw no substance.

Oscar describes the event *“Erm, er, [longer thinking pauses] a recent one of my aspiring leadership courses, [pause, showing thinking] one of the sessions was led by this [use of ‘this’ shows dismissive tone towards executive head teacher] executive head teacher of this cluster. Erm and he was basically talking about why he didn’t like certain things and he was on about jargon and what have you – and because I couldn’t see a purpose; I couldn’t see a functional application of what he was talking about, I switched off. All I hear was “Blah blah blah, me, me, me, I’m great, I’m great, I’m*

*great” Erm and afterwards, people were talking about “he’s an inspiration...” [Spoken in jovial tone] I just felt I’d been present at the emperor’s new clothes unveiling.”*

Oscar’s challenge to his current school’s leadership structures is more dramatically described later, in the section concerning negotiation.

Betty is more direct about opposing leadership, in the form of her then head teacher, but her opposition is less about that head teachers questionable performance and concerns her refusal to comply with a request from that head. Betty’s description of her oppositional behaviour is overt, because it is an account of when she was asked directly by her head teacher to perform a specific task, which she refused to do. Her narrative suggests that the head continued to try to persuade her to take on the initiative, but she continued to say no (Illeris, 2009). Her only justification for her opposition to the head was her belief that she couldn’t do the role because she states that “No way would anybody listen to me”, something the head teacher clearly did not agree with, but he failed to change her mind.

Betty describes what happened *“Bless him. You know. I mean, one time, I told him that... One time, he took me up to his office and he said, you know... It was because he wanted me to lead something and [pause] I said “No. I’m not leading that” and he said: “well why not” and I said [pause] “No way would anybody listen to me about that. Absolutely not. They’re the other way” [pause] and [pause] it turned into a two hour conversation, because the bell went twice and I said “God, we’re still in here” and at the end of it, he had his head in his hands... [laughing]”*

Not only did Betty refuse to comply with the head teacher’s demands because “no way would anybody listen to me”, but for me, Betty is showing that she has aligned herself with the staff who are “the other way”, in that they oppose what the head teacher is asking Betty to lead on. For me, it is as if the head teacher is asking Betty to perform a task he knows he could not perform, but that if Betty did it, then it would have credibility in the eyes of the staff and may be adhered to. He is attempting to get Betty to do his dirty work, but she refuses. It is here that I begin to see that there exists a clash of doxa; in this case how the head wanted to direct his school, compared to how Betty felt, particularly because of Betty’s refusal to change her view despite a two hour conversation which appears to have taken on the form of a rhetorical war, one where the lifeworld of the head battles with the lifeworld of Betty.

## 5.2 Opposition towards assessment (pupils and teachers)

As Wendy develops her opposition to the organisation's leadership, she segues into her opposition to the nature of the tasks that she is given. Wendy expresses exasperation with the requests as she perceives that the task will have been performed many times before and the information required will exist somewhere within the organisation's systems. Here, Wendy implies that the person asking for the information is either too lazy to look, does not realise it already exists, or does not know how to retrieve the information. The example of what is asked for is interesting, because it concerns pupil achievement data showing underperformance, which Wendy refers to as "hoop-jumping". This information is something which might be expected to be an important part of a hierarchy's knowledge about the school, but Wendy's disdain for the request suggests that she does not value the information and that this information is so regularly asked for that it becomes meaningless. For me, this is where the difference lies between formative and summative assessment, in that school hierarchies seek to assess how well the pupil population is performing and this is done by requesting summative assessments. However, I believe Wendy's disdain for the request is driven by her understanding of how unrepresentative a series of summative reports are for recording pupils' progress.

Wendy says *"who is asking for information about... [pause] I don't know; how many kids from your class are going to not achieve **whatever** [emphasised to in a dismissive tone, fast pace] and you've already filled that in six times; it went on their reports two weeks ago and it's gone on the spreadsheet that's in the shared area, which everybody can look at. Erm, [pause][usual tone] but those types of **ridiculous** [emphasised] things to do... [pause] jumping through hoops things, really annoy me and that **spoils your day**. [emphasised, with a sad tone]"*

Theresa supports Wendy in this opposition despite Theresa not using language to position herself as directly oppositional. She is defensive of her subject area and suggests that the organisational assessment requirements are not what she would ideally prefer, so, she describes those requests as a "nightmare". Consequently, Theresa implies that she has had to "compromise" because of the needs of the organisation.

She explains *"Well now, [pause] it does not work for [subject area] at all. The current assessment; it's just a **nightmare** [emphasised] for the subject, but [pause] sometimes,*

*you have to... In [type of] school, and this is what I've learned [pause] in [type of] school, [slow pace] you sometimes have to compromise what you as a subject specialist would like."*

For me, this articulates the notion of organisational measuring; what is easy to measure and not what is important (Biesta, 2009). Both Wendy and Theresa consider this information as unimportant, hence their dissatisfaction with the request. It is here that they see through the misrecognition of the importance of data but the organisation and its leadership do not. Again, this is a battlefield trench, marking a distinction between lifeworlds.

Lewis also opposes the current systems of monitoring and evaluation found in schools, not for pupils but for teachers. He suggests he can "play the game", because he knows the "formula" for Ofsted and has done this many times, so he can achieve the judgements he perceives as being suitable for his performance (Broadfoot, 2001). For me, Lewis is belittling the current school monitoring and evaluation agenda, suggesting that it changes little in his own practice and perhaps because of his leadership position within the school, this outside agenda has also had little impact on the school.

He says *"I've looked at the formula of what Ofsted want [pause] and played the game got around it and erm, [pause] I can produce an Ofsted lesson that... [pause] I must have done; I've done it five times... [pause]"*

A thread which links oppositional positioning to some forms of leadership and the monitoring and evaluation of both pupils and teachers is found in the current assessment and accountability regimes of our schools. Here, participants are expressing critical orientations towards the demands of explicit content required by a centralised curriculum dictated by government. They describe a resistance to the methodology of pupil evaluation as a response to their understanding of how institutions, in response to governmental interference, measure what can be easily measured, and those easily measured criteria have little value (Biesta, 2009). Lewis adds to this by including how teachers are measured, highlighting how he sees little value in this evaluation, because it can be easily manipulated.

Kelvin, throughout the interview, attempts to present himself as balanced and thoughtful when positioning himself within the organisational hierarchy. He is rarely critical of

others, including the head teacher and leadership in general. However, he did describe an occasion where he is resistant to an incoming change, such that he says he was “adamantly against” it. Furthermore, Kelvin describes how he “resisted” the change and justified this resistance because he felt the change would impact negatively on the pupils, in that the change would remove “all of the enrichment”. Here, Kelvin positions himself as opposing change, not because of who asked for the change or the effects of the change on him directly, but because of the negative impact on the pupils’ learning experiences, such that he is suggesting that the changes are about performativity, not about good pedagogy (Cox, 2013).

He says *“I don’t know if you’ve heard them talking about **condensing** [emphasised] the key stage three curriculum, which I was adamantly against. I **resisted** [emphasised] at **every** [emphasised] nook and cranny, I just resisted. I just don’t think it’s fair. The only way you could do it would be by taking out all of the **enrichment** [emphasised] stuff.”*

For me, Kelvin is substantiating a point made earlier about organisations only measuring what can be easily measured in that the “enrichment” he talks of is the qualitative aspects of a pupil’s education and so will be hard to quantify, and hence withdrawn. But Kelvin opposes this because in his lifeworld, the enrichment of his pupils is fundamental to him being a good teacher, hence a second opposition is found, where the quality of the pupil experience is more important than curriculum coverage.

Lewis makes a further point about the assessment of teachers when he describes how to manage the Ofsted process, using his voice in a mocking tone to cover what is a commonly held understanding about pupils’ progress, as it is perceived that Ofsted want to be able to witness, in a lesson, that pupils have learnt something.

As Lewis puts it *“You know, I was very aggressive with Ofsted. “You must look at this” [mock voice]. I was talking to children: [said in mock teacher’s voice, with raised volume] “Oh, you could not do that before? But now you can?” “Did you get that? Did you understand that?”*

For me, this mocking of the forms of evaluation used on teachers shows disrespect towards them and highlights the disregard teachers have for them, and again demonstrates an oppositional position via a notion that it is a fallacy to link teacher competence with pupil learning (Fenstermaker and Richardson, 2005).

### 5.3 Oppositional to a sense of being bullied

In this section, Lewis continues to suggest that his being aggressive towards Ofsted inspectors is an approach he takes because he has a sense of being bullied by the current systems and structures of monitoring and evaluation of teachers, and he will not be “pushed around” by them.

He says *“And erm, when they come at the end of the lesson, “Well, Mr. [Name], what did you think of that lesson?” [slight aggressive tone] “You’re the inspector; I’m the teacher. You tell me what you thought of that lesson”. It’s... I’m not going to be pushed around by [pause] Ofsted inspectors... [pause] anymore.”*

Wendy also discusses notions of intimidation while describing an oppositional positioning towards the forms of staff development on offer from her school. By using a condescending tone and facial expressions when she says “oh yeah, we do that” about the training opportunities, she is giving those opportunities no credibility.

*“Oh yeah, **we do that**. [words emphasised and become increasingly condescending] TLCs [definition not spoken: teaching and learning communities]? I don’t do... [pause] [defiant tone] I only do the ten compulsory ones.”*

Wendy goes further, making a distinction between herself and the people who organise the training by emphasising “they”. Wendy then takes a particular position regarding how she perceived the message about attending the training whereby she accuses those in charge of falsely implying that the training was compulsory.

She describes the events *“The others are [pause for thinking/remembering] curriculum ones, or research and development ones... Erm, [longer pause] so the one last Tuesday, even though they made it... ‘they’, [recognising in her own speech that she is distancing herself from the events – ‘they’ {them} and her] made it sound like it was [jovial tone] compulsory, [slows pace as if to highlight the point] it wasn’t actually – which was a bit cheeky, I thought.”*

This so enraged Wendy that she contacted her union representative, but jovially and conspiratorially says she has yet to receive an “answer”, perhaps indicating how the unions have moved away from supporting individual teachers in favour of supporting schools as organisations. Later in the discussion, Wendy entrenches her oppositional position by saying that she “will not be pressurised” by “them to do stuff”. Wendy’s use



of oppositional language shows that she is deliberately distinguishing herself and her role from those of the school managers and leadership structure. Wendy appears to relish her oppositional position, but also acknowledges that her approach is becoming increasingly rare and it “worries” her that other members of staff are not so oppositional.

She says “*Yes, but I mean, it worries me that some people **will not** [emphasised] [pause] be [pause] as... [pause] vocal.*”

This decreasing vocalisation concerns her because, in her opinion, it can lead to a form of bullying in that leadership does not “follow the rules” and seeks to coerce staff into conforming “because they [the staff] didn’t want to appear not to be following the rules”. Here, Wendy is describing organisational power, not in a direct hierarchical way but in a subtle way, bringing to my mind notions of power as discussed above and Bentham’s panopticon (1791), emphasising how teachers’ autonomy is regulated by leadership (Dale, 1982, Forester, 2000).

As she says “*But I know people that do **every one** [emphasised] of those TLCs, because they don’t want to **appear** [emphasised] not to be following the rules. But those **aren’t** [emphasised] the rules.*”

Wendy acknowledges that she perceives a difference between how she views education today compared to others around her, in that her oppositional positioning is a response to her being “a product of old management”, where she perceives old management as having channels of communication which allowed for her voice to be heard, but now those channels no longer exist.

As she says “*But because I’m a product of the **old** [emphasised] management, rather than the new management, [slower pace] I think that’s why I have less fear in saying... [as if another speaking] “Are you **wanting** [emphasised] me to turn up to this meeting, or are you **inviting** [emphasised] me...?”*”

Here, Wendy is describing a perception that new models of management in her school do not incorporate a two-way flow of communication down from the hierarchical structure and back up that structure; one where questions can be asked about attendance at meetings. Whereas today, Wendy describes a one-way hierarchical structure, where the flow of communication just comes from the leadership down to the teachers and can

be in the form of invisible power or organisational coercion of its staff to accept organisational conduct of conduct.

#### 5.4 Oppositional positioning towards the managerialisation of schools

Lewis' narrative of opposing the perceived Ofsted criteria of demonstrating progress continues by describing the difference between two educationalists. The first being the person he previously cited as being highly influential regarding his classroom practice and he suggests a good lesson is about being "fun", where the teacher can "make the children laugh", and by doing something different. The second person, Lewis describes is a person he has witnessed promoting Ofsted style lessons.

Lewis begins as usual in his forthright way *"Right. [Name of educationalist], [emphasised] [fast pace] to go back to him, [usual pace] said: "You go in this classroom; you make the children **laugh**; [emphasised] you have a bit of **fun**; [emphasised] you do something in a **different** [emphasised] way to everybody else, there's a fair chance they're going to remember it [pause] more than... [pause]. I mean, I've listened to [Name of educationalist] talking [pause] about [pause] children having to be progressing every 15 minutes. It does not work like that. [pause] You know, it does not work like that. It might take three weeks to get some progression out of kids; you cannot do it in 20 minutes, [pause]"*

To me, this positions Lewis as a welfare educator, a teacher concerned with the welfare of the children by instilling in them a passion for learning as opposed to a managerialised style of learning, involving the quantification of pupils' learning. Lewis emphasises this point by describing the second educationalist he witnessed during a course, suggesting that every fifteen minutes pupils should 'make progress', something he dismisses in that sometimes a much longer period is needed. Again, Lewis describes a battleground of constructs, but is clear about where he stands; on the side of his pupils, all of his pupils, not just those able to make the most progress, again highlighting how good pedagogy is pushed aside in favour of performativity (Cox, 2013).

Rather than Lewis's specific opposition against the learning of pupils and Wendy's opposition to management communication, Kelvin and Betty position themselves in opposition to the current educational hegemony. Kelvin positions himself in opposition to the general direction of education as he perceives it, by implying that education's relentless drive to achieve top grades for all pupils is a fruitless and purposeless

occupation, because when everyone has top grades the grades themselves are devalued, acknowledging the currency of performance in our schools (Broadfoot, 2001).

He says *“I was **dead** [emphasised] against that, but I do think we’re in a position where we want everyone to get ten A\*s [pause] and then what do they do with those ten A\*s... [trails off]”*

Betty describes her opposition to the current educational politics suggesting that while she is a proponent of the notion of state schooling, she is not in favour of the current political ideology, something she describes as “disappointing” her.

*“So I’ve always been very pro-state school since then. **But**, [emphasised] pro- the idea of state schools, not the current political ideology, [very sad tone] which disappoints me.”*

It is here that Kelvin opposes the performativity agenda and Wendy expresses a wholesale dissatisfaction, which for me shows how they are attempting to articulate an adherence to a lifeworld of beliefs about pupils and their learning, which is some distance from the lifeworld of education as seen by those controlling the current educational agenda. As such, when Betty and Kelvin oppose these things, they highlight their stance in a different doxa.

Furthermore, part of the current neoliberalisation of education involves the marketisation of our schools via competition, and is something Lewis opposes. He demonstrates this by showing how schools develop themselves as organisations via attaining awards. However, Lewis states that this organisational development is not concerned with improving the situation for pupils, but its main objective is to distinguish the organisation in a positive way from other similar organisations. In doing so, Lewis suggests that this will enable the school to attract more pupils and therefore grow, or “get more bums on seats”. Lewis does not object to the chasing of accolades, but he does object to the chasing of accolades to promote the school in competition with other schools, something he appears to vehemently oppose in that “it’s the same outcome but it’s the wrong motives”. This suggests that the school should strive for recognition via awards such as being a Beacon School, because that striving will benefit the pupils. However, the motivation behind the organisation is to promote itself, thereby

disadvantaging other local schools, is something he opposes, which is striking, as choice is central to the current neoliberal way of thinking (Robertson, 2001).

He says “*the motive... [pause] [fast pace] I’ve thought about this a lot [pause]. [usual pace] A lot of the stuff we do in schools now, for me, it’s **shocking** [emphasised] to admit this: it’s not done for the **benefit** [emphasised] of the kids. It’s **done** [emphasised] [pause] in order to **promote** [emphasised] the school; to be **competitive** [emphasised] in the local area. [fast pace] Not as far as sports is concerned, but to get bums on seats[pause] and I think [slow pace] that’s all wrong, [usual pace] but you cannot avoid it. [pause] So you’re trying to promote your school to be the best in the area; to be a national beacon, or whatever [pause] and [pause] really, [pause] it’s the same outcome, [pause] but it’s the **wrong** [emphasised] motives.*”

For me, Kelvin is opposing a key foundation stone of neoliberalism; choice. Therefore, he has demarked a very clear battle line of his own educational lifeworld and that of the lifeworlds of neoliberal thinkers.

### *Summary of findings from the participants’ oppositional positioning*

In this section, the participants have described a sense of their work being overly bureaucratic because of the demands of leadership as well as having experienced poor leadership styles. Furthermore, they describe their experiences as involving overly bureaucratic forms of assessment, which are not formative and which compromise pupils’ learning. These are all similar points made regarding teacher assessment. This suggests that what is being judged is only being judged because it is easily measured, not because it enhances learning. This notion of poor quality teacher assessment includes a sense of intimidation, via monitoring and other more subtle ways of coercing teachers to act in particular ways, as forms of oppression.

The opposition is made clear to the managerialisation of schools in terms of the learning of pupils, and the marketisation of schools. Hence, battle lines are drawn up and ideological trenches dug between the purpose of data and its collection; the pupil experience in terms of the curriculum, how teachers are measured and how schools are made to compete. These differences are so wide that it can take the form of a refusal to comply with instructions from the head teacher, something I see as powerful resistance. So for me, there is an emerging picture of a battle or war between ideologies, a war of the lifeworlds.

Moreover, the participants have positioned themselves as oppositional to various forms of leadership, from requesting tiresome bureaucratic tasks to performing their leadership role in a way that does not conform to the participant's notions of social justice; the participants see through the leadership rhetoric and resist it.

Their oppositional positioning towards assessment procedures for pupils is driven by distaste for leadership placing high value on summative assessment data when pedagogically, the participants align themselves towards formative assessment as being more worthy. Hence, the expectations of constant spreadsheet filling clash with their pedagogical philosophies, and are incongruent with subject specific demands, such that they perceive a system of monitoring and evaluation based on what is easily measured, not what is of value.

Opposition is also found in the disdain participants show towards how they are judged, in that they describe a formulaic notion of monitoring and evaluation so they simply perform to this simplistic formula as and when required, but not as their regular practice. As such, not only are pupils measured by what is easily measured, so are teachers, and this measurement has little value in the eyes of the participants. However, the forms of evaluation still leave participants with a sense of constraint in that they do not agree with the forms of evaluation but nevertheless comply. Furthermore, forms of organisational compliance are described as compliance over and above the rules, leaving some teachers with a sense of working within a panopticon, where someone is always watching and judging their organisational commitment.

It is the managerialisation of our schools that the participants oppose, which creates false notions of the quality of teaching via false notions of what teaching outcomes consist of. Yet the chasing of these false notions, whether it is the constant striving for A\*-Cs, or accolades for the recruitment of pupils, teachers see through these falsehoods and so express not only oppositional positioning but a general "disappointment". While they resolve themselves to accepting that *this is how it is*, they do not align themselves to it ethically.

In conclusion, the current life of the participants as teachers is expressed as a place which has a combination of the managerialisation of monitoring and evaluation, which is relatively transparent and uses outwardly visible tools and outcomes, with managerialised forms of communication – yet neither is valued by teachers. All this is

combined with notions of organisational power, based on forms of compliance, but which are invisible, use no tools and any outcomes are hidden, if they exist at all.

## 5.6 An imbalance of accountability

This section has been divided into two parts: The first concerns how participants have described their understanding of the national perspective of accountability, involving how they understand the situation to be unfair across England's schools. The second is about how they perceive an imbalance of accountability at a local level, one more personalised to their experiences. They describe an imbalance of accountability with regard to the performativity of teachers, which is articulated as a gap between the everyday lived experiences of teachers functioning in a classroom, compared to the accountability measures of outside agencies, such as Ofsted. This for me describes how they have not bought into the notion of the measurability and therefore comparability of schools, and so represents a failed *misrecognition*, in that despite all the neoliberal managerialisation found in schools, teachers still attempt to teach pupils in a way that they believe will improve the lives of those pupils, and so they attempt to subvert the performance agenda via the notion of exhibition performances.

Furthermore, frustration exists with the forms of accountability in which luck plays a part, in that classes of pupils vary, how observation teams can be directed, and a perceived lack of interest by the observers because there is a hierarchy of interest, i.e. literacy and numeracy, then science and so on, down the pecking order. Kelvin articulates an imbalance in the accountability for the performance of teachers entering the profession, in that the managerialised performativity of student teachers may suit those who have experienced life with similar managerialised criteria of performance, but may hinder those unfamiliar with this structure demonstrating how they can see a changed hegemony. Finally, the whole notion of an accountability system based on forms of human capital theory is questioned and found wanting. Consequently, the accountability measures demarcate junctures between lifeworlds.

### 5.6.1 National perspectives

Oscar considers the methods used to evaluate performance to be “inherently unfair” because of the varying contexts in which schools are located. He describes such contextual variation as including “unemployment”, “broken homes, crime” as found in “inner city areas”. Here, he constructs those characteristics as being contextually

different from the school in which he teaches, suggesting that it is obvious he will get better results than schools with a context he describes, and so he shows a dismissive attitude toward the currency with which we currently judge schools (Broadfoot, 2001). For me, this is at odds with my perception of the locality of Oscar's school, which is statistically in an area of social deprivation, similar to what Oscar describes. However, Oscar's point remains valid, as he is suggesting that social inequality is linked to educational achievement and therefore comparing schools cannot be seen as equitable.

He justifies his thinking thus *"And I think that's the other thing, you know; that I... [thoughtful pause] I think that the way that our performance is evaluated is inherently unfair. You know, you know, [slows pace] of course I'm going to have better results than a teacher who's teaching in some horrible [long pause to choose words carefully] context of social deprivation, [pause] massive unemployment, [pause] racial tension, [pauses used to emphasise each point] broken homes, crime, you know... some inner city areas, how they churn out some of the results that they do, I've no idea."*

Furthermore, Oscar shows much disdain for schools in affluent areas, ones he describes as "some leafy lane school", because he links levels of social inequality with educational achievement, suggesting affluent areas will achieve Higher Educational standards. His disdain is for how these schools are then "held up as a paragon of virtue" and used to show how *he* should perform. Something which, in Oscar's view, is unfair.

He explains *"Likewise, erm, I object to having some leafy lane school [begins jovial tone to show how he considers the situation farcical] held up as a paragon of virtue of how we should be doing things here. You know? And the situation that... the education is... it's not unfair as long as every factor is taken into account."*

Oscar attempts to reconcile the unfairness he describes by suggesting that the desire to quantify schools causes this unfairness, but implies that this quantification is necessary. For me, this shows how deeply ingrained the current managerialisation of schools has become, when a person can articulate an inequality but resigns themselves to that inequality because they cannot conceive of an alternative. However, this is the nature of paradigm shifts; they are slow, drawn-out affairs, but it does show how teachers are aware of how they should be thinking, but how they still cling to their previously held beliefs. For this reason, the misrecognition of the performativity of schools can be said to be failing, as teachers like Oscar see through it. He continues after a long pause for

thinking and says *“But they need statistics and league tables and gradings and performance indicators erm... which means that we have to have some sort of system and it’s too complicated to make them fair.”*

As the interviewer, it is here that I look back and think: why I didn’t delve further into his notion of ‘they’, but I didn’t, and can therefore only interpret the word as meaning the outside agencies who compile league tables.

Kelvin supports Oscar’s notion of the managerialisation of schools more generally, when he describes an initial teacher training system of accountability, which he perceives as being in favour of younger candidates because they are more likely to be used to the performative nature of our current managerialisation, whereas older, more mature candidates will not, and may therefore struggle with those managerialised formats, as they are products of a pre-performative era (Troman, 2008).

As Kelvin says *“You know, I think people are coming into teaching now, in their 20s might find it easier to work through the modern sort of standards. Whereas... [trails off]”*

Later in the conversation, he adds *“maybe they’ve never left the process, either, whereas I’ve had a few mature students, like 30s and 40s and they find it more difficult, because they have some **confidence** [emphasised] that they think they can deliver lessons without having to [pause] do the things, so I think it suits the **younger** [emphasised] teacher more than the more mature teacher.”*

Here Kelvin demonstrates his awareness of the changed constructs of managerialisation and appears to prefer the former, when trainees had “confidence” and did not require an ability to “do the things”, something which denotes disdain for the change.

Oscar continues his description of how he understands the national perspectives of school accountability by describing his perception of an inequality brought about by the quantification of pupils’ knowledge and skills in terms of the curriculum. Here, Oscar describes his understanding of a further inequality concerning the importance of some curriculum areas over others, in that he sees English and maths as being given a higher status than his own subject. With this higher status comes better resourcing and more time to teach, as well as instilling notions of this higher status in the minds of pupils and parents, creating an attitude of inequality in that English and maths are perceived as being more important. Oscar finalises his comments by suggesting that not only does



this negatively impact on how pupils and parents may perceive his subject area, but also on “education as a general concept”. Here, I suggest Oscar is attempting to articulate a feeling of loss towards his notion of “education as a general concept”, in that schools are now not concerned with educating pupils in terms of their welfare as well as their knowledge, but have a single focus on preparing them to function in a globalised economy; the notion that schools are no longer welfare institutions but creators of human capital (Becker, 1962), a notion we return to soon.

Oscar explains *“Erm, maths and English, erm... I’m not saying anything that I haven’t said to the Head of Maths or English are on a pedestal that the rest of us can only dream about. Time, resources... but more importantly, [long pause for listener’s impact] the attitude of parents and children are different about those subjects, because they are bombarded with how important maths and English are. [Spoken as if by others, as that is all he hears] “Maths and English, Maths and English, Maths and English” and what happens there’s that that works in some student to exclude the importance of other subjects, or the importance of education as a general concept...”*

For me, Oscar not only describes how he sees through the misrecognition of status amongst the curriculum but also how he demarks a battle line between his notion of “education as a general concept” and human capital theory.

Kelvin adds to this theme of the imbalance of accountability via the curriculum when he expresses concerns with Ofsted in that there appears to be a differentiated approach to their monitoring. Kelvin describes his Ofsted experience as being over by “twenty to ten” implying a light touch and “no more involvement”. Here, Kelvin is suggesting weaknesses in the monitoring, as the focus is inequitable and based on a perspective that some curriculum areas are more important than others. Hence, Kelvin’s perception of a light touch would not enable him to develop as a practitioner and therefore has little value for him.

He says *“I had no more involvement apart from that, so in some respects, it’s a bit frustrating [emphasised] in that respect... [pause]”*

Furthermore, Kelvin shows an understanding of the human capital (Becker, 1962) agenda, but understands it as a drive to include more testing, resulting in further quantification of pupils, something he dismisses by saying *“Well I think the rationale is:*

*they compare us with the Finns or the Chinese or the Singaporeans. This is where we **are** [emphasised] and we'd like to be **there** [emphasised] and the only way to get **there** [emphasised] is by giving more **tests** [emphasised] and doing more **levels** [emphasised] and... [pause] But so that's how I think why we're getting there and I think we'll carry on. I can't see **anybody** [emphasised] changing it. But also, I... [pause] To be quite honest about it, to some extent, teachers get the environment they **deserve**. [emphasised] You know, I think there is **shoddy** [emphasised] teaching going on and people are... they say "well, we have to test..." You know?"*

Here, Kelvin not only recognises the flawed nature of repeated testing (Biesta, 2009), but he suggests that this way of thinking is so embedded that it is unlikely to be changed. Furthermore, he appears to blame the teaching profession as a whole, for letting this situation take hold. However, Kelvin also recognises that an international comparison is a false premise as the cultural differences are so strong, as he explains *"But also... [pause] I [fast pace] mean, I used to work in Taiwan, where kids would be studying 'til nine o'clock at night, cramped schools... they were there 'til nine o'clock at night. [usual pace] And we're not going to do that."*

Kelvin's comments appear contradictory in that he sees through the notion of testing to create human capital and sees the cultural flaws in those comparisons; but, he accepts blame for the situation via his professional status. However, this only reflects his confusion based on contradictory lifeworlds, his own, alongside his understandings of how false the misrecognition of international league tables are compared to the neoliberal hegemony demanding a focus on human capital based on the misrecognition of globalised economies.

Wendy also attempts to describe her understanding of the misrecognition. She explains how the current system of performativity of teachers is at odds with the demands of human capital in that schools and teachers inflate their test results by deskilling the pupils:

She says *"...Is not to **create** [emphasised] good employees."*

I seek to clarify *"Mmhm. So what are we creating?"*

She continues “Er, [long pause] kids who can get qualifications. I don’t think that... [pause] I don’t think kids today... [pause] there’s an element of spoon feeding, because we’re so **pushed** [emphasised] by results...”

I concur “Yeah. [overlapping]”

She continues her flow “It’s like erm... [pause] you know, [faster pace] so and so hasn’t done their coursework. [usual pace] Once upon a time, that would have been: **unlucky** [emphasised] then. You don’t get that qualification. But [fast pace] we’re so pushed by [as if spoken by another] “Oh, you must get five A stars to Cs, including English and maths that.” [usual voice] it does not matter if you haven’t done your coursework; [as if spoken by another] “look here’s a coursework to base your coursework on” [usual voice] or something like that, you know?”

Although Wendy is clearly suggesting that some of her colleagues cheat by over-supporting their pupils, she acknowledges that it is the system of performativity which produces this. It is the ‘competition’ built into the system which creates the opposite, in Wendy’s mind, to what the qualification of pupils is supposed to achieve; that is improved employability, not simply improved test scores. Therefore, Wendy is not only acknowledging the misrecognition but she is describing how it is counterproductive as grade gathering is not adding human capital but is deskilling her pupils, as well as how exam measurements lead to the deprofessionalisation of teachers (Evans, 2008).

### **5.6.2 A local perspective**

Betty’s account describes contradictory notions of a “gap”. Firstly, Betty describes a gap in her performance as a teacher in that she recognises that she has “exhibition” lessons, when she is observed, and that these lessons result in positive judgements from observers. But she also recognises that there exists a gap between these exhibition lessons and her day to day practice, in that, what is delivered under daily circumstances is very different from the exhibition lessons. Betty does not appear to consider this gap to be disadvantageous to her pupils, but that it is an account of her understanding of the reality of teaching day in day out.

As she says “I came straight out of teacher training into the year three and we were immediately Ofsted-ed, [pause] and I got a grade one and I was really **pleased** [emphasised, followed by pause to further emphasise], by the lead inspector – I was

*really [emphasised] happy, but I knew that that was an exhibition lesson and I think the difference between [pause] an exhibition lesson and how you're teaching every day, I think there's a gap and you're **aware** [emphasised] and you're always trying to close that **gap**. [emphasised] Because you **know** [emphasised] how to do good practice if somebody walks in and you **know** [emphasised] what you deliver on a wet November Thursday when [pause] the photocopier's broken down [pause] and you know, last night your visitors didn't leave 'til half past midnight and you were wanting them to go at nine. You know what I mean? And you know, [faster pace] real life gets in the way and [usual pace] so I think I'm always aware of that gap and I think I've... [pause] I've always known that I could deliver that exhibition lesson because that first Ofsted gave me that; I got some very nice feedback and er, but [pause] then again,"* her narrative continues and we pick it up again soon.

Kelvin supports this notion of the imbalance of accountability, in that he considers what Ofsted look for is less relevant than "what my kids are doing when I'm not watching". This implies a confidence in his ability to perform in front of an observer because he knows how to perform and can prepare "all the bits of paper" and be ready for them. What Kelvin considers more relevant is what the pupils do when he hasn't prepared for the observer; what it would be like on a day to day basis. It is this perceived lack of rigour in what a snapshot observation can achieve that frustrates Kelvin, and he shows his lack of respect towards Ofsted or other outside snapshot judgements. This adds to my perception that the lived experiences of teachers on a daily basis is at odds with what outside agencies might find, but this is fine by teachers because, for the majority of their time, they can carry on with delivering what they consider to be a good education.

As Kelvin explains *"At the start of the lesson, [fast pace] I showed them my tracking data, my pupil premium, the intervention, [usual pace] all the bits of paper they wanted to see and they watched me teach and they were happy with it. In some respects, I'd rather... You know, "this is what my kids are doing when I'm not watching..." You know, but that's what I found **frustrating**. [emphasised] But it was all quite pleasant and passive, for me. [pause] And [pause] truth be told, my Ofsted finished twenty to ten on the first day."*

Although both Kelvin and Betty appear confident in their ability to perform when observed, later in Betty's narrative, her comments reflect a different position, in which she expresses anxiety regarding those exhibition lessons. In the first part, Betty appears confident in her ability to perform with some success when being observed, but her account demonstrates a turn in her thinking as she is concerned about the rapidly and constantly changing focus of an exhibition lesson. Here, Betty talks as if being considerate towards other teachers and not herself; she uses "my colleagues" and then "they" to describe the anxiety. The focus of this anxiety is on "losing confidence" in knowing where the "finishing line is" and that her understanding of an exhibition lesson to achieve positive feedback is "receding".

Betty, continuing the above narrative "...then again, *Ofsted are always changing what they want to see as... what is that mark of excellence and I think as you **age** [emphasis] and I'm 50 this summer, I think that I've seen my **colleagues** [elongated to emphasise] people losing the confidence that they know **where that** [emphasised by slow pace as if thinking carefully about the words chosen] finishing line is. Erm, [pause] they're aware **that** [emphasised and elongated][pause] I've never had this conversation with anybody. I don't know, this is a supposition, but... [pause] I feel that we're aware of this gap at some level or I am and erm, it's like that... You know, what you need to do to get a grade one in an exhibition lesson is sort of somehow receding slightly, because the pace of change in education is taking it away from you unless you are working really really hard and [fast pace] reading all the blogs and keeping up with education and really, you know, keeping on your mettle. [usual pace] And the gap can open up as well, because it's moving on faster and faster as you age and there's nowhere to hide in teaching."*

Betty attempts to justify this anxiety by suggesting that it may be age related, in that the "gap" in her knowledge regarding expectations of lesson performance is "moving on faster and faster as you age". This perception may be related to her teacher lifecycle (Day and Gu, 2010), but is related to other notions of professional vulnerability, especially when considering Betty's final comment of "there's nowhere to hide in teaching". This notion of professional vulnerability is something I will return to later on. It is pertinent to consider Theresa's views now, as they align with Betty's, although I will repeat Theresa's words in the section regarding professional vulnerability, as I perceive an overlapping of these areas. For me the anxiety expressed crystallises my

concept of a battle between lifeworlds, one where the lifeworld of performativity is encroaching on the lifeworld of what is perceived as a valuable education.

Theresa's discussion also includes a section where she describes professional vulnerability via schools' accountability systems. She describes a situation when her head teacher asked if she would have a "chief inspector" in her lesson so the inspector could see the pupils "fly". This lesson went well and the pupils worked well and showed enthusiasm, meeting the needs of the inspector and reflecting well on Theresa and therefore the school. However, at the end of the narrative, she admits "you can be lucky, can't you", which for me implies an understanding that no matter what effort or care teachers make in the planning and preparation for lessons, the potential for the lesson to not go to plan and therefore not reflect well on teachers is ever-present. This is a particular problem because of the snapshot nature of schools' accountability systems, including systems of outside accountability such as Ofsted. Therefore, Theresa's notion of an imbalance of accountability is such that the snapshot may present the teacher as competent or incompetent depending on "luck[y]", which for me represents a poor indicator of performance, unlikely to help with the educational needs of the pupils. The use of the word "luck[y]" could be interpreted as false modesty, but the intonation and body language does not support this view; rather, the notion that Theresa considers luck an element of the monitoring process, which gives her a sense of vulnerability.

As Theresa explains "*...and the head came to me on the Sunday and he said "So, if I bring the lead inspector in tomorrow morning, will I see them fly?" And I said "I hope so". You know? So in they came and the kids were **amazing** [emphasised] [pause] and I just did the lesson that I would have done. [pause] It was the next thing, you know, 'cos you can't really... [pause] You haven't got... [pause] And I just did... [pause] And it was... [pause] But the **passion** [emphasised] and the **depth** [emphasised] of their answers, you know, and the way that they worked and their enthusiasm, she really liked. I mean, you can be lucky, can't you?"*

#### ***Summary of the findings from what is described as an imbalance of accountability***

An imbalance of accountability is expressed on a national level because the data used is not contextualised and emphasises a clash of doxa. However, the notion of managerialised school accountability is now perceived as being so established that it is unquestionable, such that it is now seen as the dominant discourse. In addition, new

recruits to teaching have embedded managerialised practices because they are products of a managerialised system, so future questioning of this form of accountability is unlikely. However, the participants do question the imbalances in terms of the perceived imbalance of resource allocation and monitoring between curriculum areas. The imbalance of accountability, at a local perspective, concerns how teachers have learnt to deliver exhibition lessons and produce the required bureaucracy when observed. They understand that this is not part of their daily experience, showing how they teach according to their own moral and ethical stances most of the time, with limited periods of performance. However, the continually changing success criteria for an observed lesson causes anxiety about how to perform and involves an element of luck because of the snapshot nature of this accountability; the anxiety for me, demonstrating a battle between doxa. Furthermore, there are contradictory notions of finding fault with schools being driven by human capital theory, whilst accepting blame for underperformance, as if the rhetoric is believed, but as this is articulated as an issue, the participants show that they see through the misrecognition. Finally, it is noted that teachers' performativity requirements have a knock-on effect for pupils, in that their personal effectiveness is not challenged because it is the teachers who are measured via the pupil's results and so over-support the pupils.

From my analysis, it is noted that the national context of comparison is seen as unfair because it fails to allow for adequate contextual analysis, and it is especially unfair to suggest that schools should model themselves on other schools which are contextually dissimilar. As such, the quantitative measurement of schools is seen as flawed. Also, the managerialisation of schools may suit younger teachers, as they are the product of this hegemony and so older people entering the profession may be disadvantaged because of unfamiliarity towards this way of viewing the world. Thus, contrasting competency-based learning with skills-based learning.

The participants' descriptions suggest that there exists a hierarchy of curriculum importance based on notions of human capital theory, which gives higher status to those curriculum areas that are quantified in international league tables and low status to those curriculum areas that are not included in league table measurements. As a result, perceptions of parents and pupils have changed, causing frustration for teachers teaching subjects of low status, but also a perception that schools have lost the holistic approach to education, in that it is no longer about producing pupils with a broad and

balanced knowledge of the curriculum, but is now focused on areas of international comparison in order to compete in a 'global market'.

Furthermore, the change in focus from the performativity of the pupils being their own issue to the performativity of the pupils being the teachers' issue has weakened notions of employability, because of the pressures put on teachers to prove their worth via their pupils' examination performance. This in turn results in a lack of resilience and reduced self-motivation among pupils.

At a local perspective, participants describe their confidence in managing the performance process via observation of their lessons by being able to produce all the right documentation and deliver staged lessons. The gap between what is delivered on a day to day basis and the expectations during an observation is acknowledged and is accepted as the reality of being able to cope in a rapidly changing and yet demanding context. However, there exists a gap between the participant's knowledge of performativity expectations and the ever-changing nature of those expectations. This leaves them with a sense of professional vulnerability. Furthermore, the snapshot nature of school monitoring and accountability measures are described as being unfair because they require an element of luck for a good judgement to be received and it is regarded that luck should not be an element of a formal professional judgement of accountability. Consequently the current system is seen as flawed.

### **5.7 Oppression - The personal vulnerability via monitoring and evaluation of teachers**

#### **Introduction**

The participants' main concerns expressed in this section of the findings were alluded to previously and centre on a sense of personal vulnerability brought about by their schools' internal and external systems of monitoring and evaluation. These systems use lesson observation as a basis for this monitoring and it is this notion of observation followed by a judgement that causes the perceived vulnerability in terms of their professional competence to perform their role as teachers. Therefore, their expression of personal vulnerability is also a notion of professional vulnerability and for me describes the battlefield of opposing doxa.



### 5.7.1 Professional Vulnerability

Let's begin with Theresa who, as we have seen earlier, describes nostalgia, a loss of a past and better time, in terms of the methods used for monitoring and evaluating her work. She describes a time when there was "nobody looking over your shoulder", suggesting to me that currently there is often somebody *looking over her shoulder* and that she considers herself to be over-monitored, lacking the time to reflect on her learning (Weil and McGill, 1989) or to experiment without fear of the consequences (Huberman, 1995). Theresa links this notion of monitoring to how people shared resources and classroom practice, such that she describes herself as having "learnt lots" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). The linkage between these two points, the monitoring and the sharing, leads me to consider whether Theresa is making the point that with increased monitoring, teachers perceive a competitive element in their relationships with one another, such that they no longer share resources or discuss classroom practice because they want to keep them, so that they stand out as high performers during the monitoring and one way of doing that is to not help others.

As she explains *"There was nobody looking over your shoulder to see what you were doing and [usual pace and tone] it was just a very **positive**, [emphasised] like, I learned **lots** [emphasised] from other people, you know, **people** [emphasised] shared, "oh I have done this and this has worked really well and I made this work sheet and I have done this," [fast pace] so that was really nice."*

Betty also describes occasions when the lack of formal monitoring via observation within the classroom may be desirable, especially in terms of her learning. Betty's account suggests that a period with no monitoring was necessary during the early period in her learning to become a teacher because it enabled her to try things out and to see what works for her but without any consequences. She expresses the need for teachers to be able to "cut your teeth behind closed doors" (Huberman, 1995).

As she says, *"Yes. It was very nice **actually**, [emphasised] because they **closed** [emphasised] the door and they said "What you probably don't need is to cut your teeth behind closed doors" and I [pause] was really grateful for that amount of trust [pause] and autonomy, because you know what your [beginning to laugh, jovial tone] first lessons are like; you're very glad if nobody's watching them."*

Both Theresa and Betty's accounts demonstrate a professional vulnerability in that they describe positively accounts from past practice, thereby suggesting that current practice is less good. However, Wendy continues the theme of professional vulnerability, but in her current context, with a description that is long and punctuated by active listening sounds from me, as well as sentences acknowledging what she is saying. Because of this, I have left the script as a whole so the reader can get the sense of both her passion for teaching and her disappointment with the current lifeworld she finds herself in.

She begins *"Well if you're doing a piece of coursework, which is going to take a fortnight to do at three lessons a week, you might have one target at the beginning of those two weeks."*

Me *"Mmhm. [overlapping]"*

*"And actually sometimes, [faster pace] and I did this the other day, with my year tens, who are doing first aid at the moment, erm, [usual pace] they have a kind of pack that they're doing and I actually tested this, the other day, where I came in... I was already in, they started entering and I **didn't do anything**. [emphasised each word individually] I took the register. Somebody asked me for Tipp-Ex, [pause] somebody else asked me a question about the local council [pause] and I think somebody asked me for a red pen [pause] and that's the only input I had to that lesson. [pause to acknowledge points been made]"*

Me *"Mmm. [overlapping]"*

*"Now, [she emphasises] if Ofsted had been there, they would have been like: where were my learning objectives? Why didn't I review at the end how far they'd progressed etc.? But **actually**, [emphasised] that was a chunk of about four lessons. About a week and one... we only had three lessons a week and I think, if you're teaching them to go out [pause] and be [pause] a **nurse** [emphasised with lower volume] or whatever, they're going to have to manage themselves when they go into that job. Erm, so I don't... that's what **annoys** [emphasised] me at the moment. That's **worse** [emphasised] now, I think, than it used to be. That... that your lesson has to be like: bang, bang, bang, in an order."*

Me *"Yeah. [overlapping]"*

*“Like I quite often didn’t used to tell them what we were doing something for. Erm, [pause] I would have an envelope on the desk, or something like that and I would say “Right, look through that envelope and put them into three categories”. ”*

Me *“Yeah, I remember doing that.”*

Wendy continues but with many pauses, as she tries to find the right way to express herself *“So, they would... [pause] and they would have to... [pause] and I think that’s kind of...[pause] it’s kind of... [pause] that’s quite a good way of them learning. That’s an old thinking skills thing, from when [name] taught me to teach, but actually for them to make decisions and “what’s this all about?” and discuss “why d’you think we’re doing this?” “I don’t know” “what categories d’you think she wants?” “I don’t know”... all of that is the discovery of the process. [pace slows right down] But in Ofsted terms, that wouldn’t be as good.”*

Here, Wendy has expressed her professional vulnerability regarding her classroom practice in that the nature of her subject requires certain teaching methods but these methods are counter to Wendy’s perceptions of the requirements of Ofsted; the clash of her lifeworld of what it is to be a good teacher and that of performativity as prescribed by others. Wendy justifies this because of her belief in creating resilient learners that are better able to cope when they have left school. Wendy has a notion that the strict format of what Ofsted requires in a lesson has worsened. She reflects on how some lessons involving “thinking skills”, a concept that a few years ago was considered an essential part of the teacher’s classroom practice, but would now be regarded as inferior in some way by Ofsted, such that at one time she could align her lifeworld with the performativity expectations, but that is now no longer possible as the performance expectation opposes her notions of good teaching.

This notion of the changing nature of the monitoring criteria is something that Betty also describes, in that she experiences it as “a rapidly changing context”. At the end of this section, Betty says “not always” twice, which in the context of her words, appears to make little sense. However, by listening to her intonation and pauses I interpret those words to mean that she cannot keep pace with this changing context, at least not always.

She says *“You know, engaging with really good practice and keeping it there in the face of a... [fast pace] in a changing context, a rapidly changing context, [usual pace] but at*

*the same time, [struggling to find words] I think you... the sort of observation imperative and the judging imperative is the [slow pace] external yardstick that you periodically review against. [pause] Erm, not always. [pause] Not always."*

Betty's perception of a rapidly changing criteria for success may contribute to an explanation for her comments regarding how difficult she finds being observed, despite her love of teaching, and so for me exemplifies my notion of a battle between teachers' hard-won beliefs in what it is to be a good teacher and what the performativity hegemony wants.

As she explains "*I find being **observed** [emphasised] extremely difficult, because I've got **complete** [emphasised] stage fright erm and of course, that does not affect my day to day teaching at all; I **love** [emphasised] teaching and I **love** [emphasised] being with kids and I have a very, very relaxed style and of course, when somebody walks into that door, I find it extremely difficult to just **relax** [emphasised] enough to keep going"*

Furthermore, Betty suggests an inability in herself to combine what she considers her professional duties as a teacher and her ability to cope with a constant threat "when people walk in the door from everywhere". In the next section, "they" are the pupils and for me, Betty really shows her love for her pupils and the enthusiasm she maintains for her role.

Betty says "*And you can get such an **interesting** [emphasised] dynamic [pause] and that they will come up with the stuff; [pause] all you really have to do is spin the plate, you know. And they'll kind of take it. [enthusiastic tone] And they do. But I can't [faster pace but sadder tone] do that when people walk in the door from everywhere."*

I consider Betty is suggesting that she perceives her lessons are constantly being interrupted by observers and that there is a clash between the expectations of those observers and her own expectations as a teacher, with a duty for the learning of her pupils; a clash of doxa. This is something outlined in Wendy's comments above, and is building a picture that suggests the monitoring requirements demanded by the managerialised performativity currently found in our schools is impacting negatively on the quality of learning in our classrooms (Fenstermaker and Richardson, 2005), as perceived by the very teachers delivering the lessons.

This notion is further exemplified by Lewis, when he describes his professional vulnerability in terms of what he chooses to access in terms of his training. As he explains; *“Oh yes, [emphasised] there’s access that needs to be accessed. Not [emphasised] particularly [pause] for the reasons [emphasised] designed. [pause] The reasons [emphasised] designed is to make it better for the children; that’s not [emphasised] the reason we go on the courses, or take training; [slow pace, conspiratorial tone] it’s to cover your back.”*

Me, a little surprised as this is a deputy head speaking *“Right. [overlapping]”*

He continues *“Which is often... [pause] like a **moderation** [emphasised] course. We’ll go to a moderation course, to just say: [fast pace] “Yeah, we know what we’re doing, but we’re just doing this to tick the box to just say...” [usual pace] Right, if somebody comes in to say “this is wrong”, we’ll say “oh, well, we checked this moderation course”. So [pause] **to me**, [emphasised] it’s covering my back. Maybe the old **cynic** [emphasised] is coming out in me now, [pause] ‘cos I’ve seen this happen a lot of times.”* Thus, he is describing a sense of personal vulnerability, something he seeks to acquiesce by attending courses so he can challenge negative judgements.

For me, Lewis is suggesting that he only attends training events to “cover his back”, implying that he needs to attend so that others cannot judge him negatively. The others he describes as “somebody”, which I suggest can be interpreted as an observer from an outside agency such as Ofsted. Lewis’ notion of “covering” his “back” by attending training events is done because he has seen colleagues get criticised “a lot of times”. So, Lewis is describing how he seeks training which can align his doxa with the outside doxa, which demands certain kinds of performances.

In terms of her monitoring and subsequent evaluation, Theresa describes two accounts in separate parts of the interview, one describing how she had a lesson observation which went positively. However, because she acknowledges that this successful observation included an element of luck, she is suggesting that the monitoring of her work via observation is flawed and as such, is inherently unfair, and so forms the battle ground of lifeworlds.

I have used this section of transcript before, but it does reveal the point. She explains: *“the head came to me on the Sunday and he said “So, if I bring the lead inspector in*

*tomorrow morning, will I see them fly?” And I said “I hope so”. You know? So in they came and the kids were **amazing** [emphasised][pause] and I just did the lesson that I would have done. [pause] It was the next thing, you know, ‘cos you can’t really... [pause] You haven’t got... [pause] And I just did... [pause] And it was... [pause] But the **passion** [emphasised] and the **depth** [emphasised] of their answers, you know, and the way that they worked and their enthusiasm, she really liked. I mean, you can be lucky, can’t you?”*

Theresa’s second account, towards the end of the interview, concerns other monitoring via observation that she has experienced but where the results have been rather negative, with the result that, Theresa has to be observed again by an inspector.

*As she explains “You know, for instance, this year, I’ve had two lesson observations; I’ve conducted... my lesson observations have been conducted really professionally. They have been last lesson on a **Friday**. [emphasised][pause] They have often been at the **end** [emphasised] of a very long and busy term and you know, [pause] they have been, I’ve got really good feedback and you know, and I think: well, you know, that’s quite **tough** [emphasised] and if that does not count for anything, you know, [pause] then it’s very demoralising. As ended well, when Ofsted came and I’m now being told I’ve got to be **seen again** [emphasised] by **another** [emphasised] inspector.”*

Theresa does say that she had “really good feedback”, which I interpret as her saying that some areas were praised as part of a formative feedback process, as well as her conducting some impression management in front of me. However, her use of “demoralising”, as well as having to be seen again, plus the tone she uses, suggests that the observation did not go well, and this is commented on later when she says “*I’ve got to jump through hoops again, to prove that I’m a good teacher*”.

During the above section, Theresa suggests that monitoring, via observation, includes an element of luck in terms of the standards expected and that this may vary according to the year group being taught, the time of day, the day of the week and the part of the year of that observation. Here, Theresa does not just include the weariness of her pupils, but also of herself, in that she has numerous other professional activities to perform as well as plan for her teaching. Here, I consider that she is not only suggesting that luck is an inappropriate element of any monitoring device, but also that a more considered approach in terms of the variables she outlines would improve the nature of the

evaluation and so the nature of the feedback, resulting in her professional development, based on a realistic contextual evaluation, demonstrating her opposition to the performativity agenda as it currently stands.

Two other areas covering the nature of the participants' professional vulnerability are discussed in terms of those doing the observation; one in terms of dealing with the observers and one concerning the professional attributes of observers. Lewis appears to show his professional vulnerability in the way he discusses a perceived need to be "aggressive" towards inspectors, as he puts it to *"Play the game [pause], play the game, and be quite aggressive [pause] towards the **Ofsted inspectors**. [emphasised]"*

Whether or not Lewis is actually aggressive towards observers is not as important; it says more to me about how Lewis has a notion of antagonism towards them. Lewis shows a notion of *dominance* during an encounter being important and perceives that if he can dominate the encounter, then he has a more prominent voice with which to direct the inspector and thereby get a more positive judgement of his skills, attributes and performance as a teacher and school leader. This is something I doubt would influence an inspector, but because Lewis perceives it as necessary, this indicates his sense of personal vulnerability and certainly shows that what I have described earlier as a battle of lifeworlds, may indeed be a war.

### 5.8 Professional vulnerability via the deprofessionalisation of teachers

I have outlined Theresa's description of, as I see it, her professional vulnerability in terms of her notion of nostalgia. This nostalgia is for a period in her professional life when she experienced less monitoring. However, Theresa's notion of less monitoring does not include less work; almost the opposite, because the lack of being "monitored and scrutinised" was replaced by the notion of a "trusted" professional.

As she put it *"They trusted me to be able to deliver and [jovial/happy tone] of course, you weren't monitored and scrutinised; you were **trusted** [emphasised] [pause] and [pause] they... [pause] in a nice way, they supported you. [pause] [usual pace and tone] But it was a completely different **climate** [emphasised] to what it is now.*

Me *"Hmm. Right. [overlapping]"*

She continues *"You were **trusted** [emphasised] to be a **professional**. [emphasised] Your PGCE and your degree actually **meant** [emphasised] something and it was very much..."*

*[pause] yes, you were... [pause] you know, they had high **expectations** [emphasised] of you. [pause]”*

Here Theresa is articulating her perception of the deprofessionalisation of teaching because of the introduction of managerialisation and associated monitoring and evaluation. She emphasises this change by stating that “your PGCE and your degree actually meant something”, suggesting that if those qualifications meant something in the past, then now they do not. Therefore, not only does the managerialisation deprofessionalise (MacBeath, 2012) teachers, but the entry requirements for the profession have also been lowered, consequently lowering the professional standards of teachers (Day et al., 2006).

The theme of the deprofessionalisation of teachers is also addressed by Kelvin when he says “So it’s **a lot more** [emphasised] paper driven now and I think that wasn’t just this Government; I think it happened with Gordon Brown and there are a lot more paper trails for what you’re **doing** [emphasised] and things have to be justified. You know, the **pupil premium** [emphasised] money’s a great thing, you know, It’s good that money’s out there, but you’ve got to justify where it’s being spent. You know, there’s a lot more **justification** [emphasised] of that you do in some respects. I think a lot of your freedom’s been taken away... [trails off]”

Here, Kelvin, alongside Theresa, suggests that the managerialisation via “a lot more paper trails” is due to the greater need for “justification” within the profession and in this respect, Kelvin perceives that teachers’ professional autonomy or “freedom” has been taken away.

While Theresa and Kelvin express their notions of professional vulnerability via over-managerialisation, leading to a sense of deprofessionalism of teachers, Wendy expresses professional vulnerability in terms of her understanding of obeying the requirements of leadership. This is not in terms of her job description or her professional standards, but that some areas of authority have blurred regulations, and follows her previous discussion regarding institutional power.

She explains “And they [they being the teachers] don’t want to appear unenthusiastic in case... [pause] I don’t know, they get **sacked**. [emphasised] I don’t know. [jovial tone, almost laughing] I’ve never known anybody get sacked. [usual tone] I’ve known people



*go quietly away, but you know, not turning up to your research and development meeting, is not going to mean that you're going to lose your job."*

Me *"Mmm. It's not a sackable offence, is it?"*

*"No. Exactly."*

Me *"But what you're saying is that some people have a perceived fear that that's a potential..."*

She agrees *"Yeah"*

Here, Wendy talks of attendance at training sessions or "research and development meetings", where the rules are that a set number of attendance is required but that some feel obliged to attend more because "they don't want to appear un-enthusiastic" "in case" they get sacked. Wendy admits that it is unlikely that they will get sacked, but agrees when I suggest to her that people have a perceived fear that that is a potential outcome.

My initial analysis of these comments concerned thoughts of organisational coercion as described by Etzioni (1961), but on reflection I think Wendy is describing how some staff choose to manage their organisational 'front of stage' and in order to do this, they make an appearance of enthusiasm for the organisation's goals. Therefore, for me, this is where Goffman's (1990) impression management intersects with Foucault's (1980) institutional disciplinary power. Hence, it shows how Wendy, as a long standing member of staff, who has experienced a variety of organisational leadership styles, is less affected by her need to manage her organisational 'face' and is accordingly less affected by the organisation's disciplinary power. Nevertheless, Wendy is still describing a change, albeit for others in the school, which shows a reduction in the autonomy of teachers to choose the training events they want. It is this deprofessionalisation via reduced autonomy which for me is a key weapon in the arsenal of neoliberalism in that, if the rhetoric of 'school improvement' deprofessionalises teachers, it therefore prevents opposition, something the unions appear to have colluded with. However, the perceived reality still remains that the lived experience of teachers is a battle field of opposing lifeworlds and doxa.

### *Summary of the findings described as the participants sense of professional vulnerability*

This section, looking at teachers' sense of professional vulnerability brought about by new forms of monitoring and evaluation of their performance describes clearly drawn battle lines between the lifeworlds of teachers and the dominant hegemony. This is noted in the form of nostalgia for a time when teachers were trusted professionals and contrasts starkly with the managerialised monitoring and evaluation currently found in schools. Furthermore, teachers describe a clash of doxaic thinking between notions of what it is to be a good teacher and that the sorts of performance expectations are a weak form of teaching and are flawed, because of the variable behaviour of pupils throughout the school day. Consequently, teachers use tactics whilst being monitored, including aggressive behaviours towards the observer. Moreover, the emphasis on monitoring and subsequent evaluation of teachers' performance is seen as deprofessionalising teachers via a lack of an organisational voice and so a lack of autonomy, subsequently leading to a sense of personal and professional vulnerability.

For me, what has been described is a war which uses the performativity agenda with its associated rhetoric of school improvement via standardised targets and managerialised and quantifiable systems and structures to force compliance to a neoliberal industrialised notion of education. Yet teachers see through much of the neoliberal misrecognition, especially the quantifiable nature of learning, and tactically balance their desire to conform and perform when required, and provide a good education for their pupils when they are not being observed. Nevertheless, the lived experiences describe a resistance to the neoliberal agenda in that there exists a war of the ways of thinking about schools, teaching and education; a war of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa. In the next section, I will develop the theme of resistance further, not just in terms of performativity and the general institutional hegemony found in English schools, but in terms of an organisational resistance.

The participants, as teachers, consider that compared to the past, they are currently over-monitored and this negatively impacts on their community of practice because the climate of performativity requires an element of competition between teachers, resulting in less collegial practices, such as sharing resources. Furthermore, this over-monitoring impacts on teachers' learning, as it prevents learning practices which may 'fail', yet could enable transformative learning experiences for their pupils.

Professional vulnerability is described as something that results from a mismatch between the sorts of performativity expectations from standardised monitoring and evaluation compared to the types of classroom practices which engage pupils and which are needed to meet the requirements of some curricular specifications. Furthermore, practices that were once held in high esteem as valuable learning tools are now considered as failing to meet the requirements of the current monitoring and evaluation criteria. Little wonder there is a sense that teachers cannot keep pace with the rapidly changing criteria for success.

The monitoring and evaluation criteria is now so standardised that it is described as having a negative impact on pupil learning, as its prescriptive nature inhibits notions of spontaneous teaching as a response to pupil needs. This means there is a clash of expectations; those of the monitoring structures and those of how teachers perceive the needs of pupils.

This over-managerialisation of teachers' performativity leaves the participants with a sense of vulnerability, which drives their professional development, not as a desire to improve their practice, but as a notion of protecting themselves from performativity judgements. Furthermore, these judgements are deemed as flawed, because they include elements of luck, and contextual information is not considered. These notions of professional vulnerability are highlighted by how teachers feel they need to guard against the monitoring devices and may therefore behave aggressively towards those conducting the monitoring.

The new forms of managerialised monitoring are seen as eroding teachers' professional identity, as they are based on notions of low trust, with a teachers' professional identity only as good as their last judgement. It does not include other notions regarding pupil welfare or teachers' pedagogical understandings.

The sum of this professional vulnerability is expressed as being one of teacher employability, in that there is a sense that, despite an understanding that the monitoring and evaluation devices are flawed, there is vulnerability towards these flawed judgements being used so that they may lose their jobs.

## 5.9 Practice Resistance

### Introduction

In this section, we will see that within teachers' communities of practice, (Wenger, 1989) there are numerous opportunities for members to negotiate and re-negotiate meaning; practice resistance. They do this by emphasising only some aspects of that meaning and by choosing to listen to some leaders and to ignore others. Furthermore, there appears to be an institutional hierarchy, so the original message from leadership can become a very different entity once it reaches the teachers.

Other negotiation takes place via a notion of 'whingers and moaners'. This form of negotiation is successful in that some decisions are changed, but it is not organisationally recognised. What we see is teachers being forced to find alternative routes for negotiation because of their lack of organisational voice.

### 5.10 The Weapons of Resistance - Negotiation

Despite the suppression and oppression described above, teachers still use various techniques to resist; practice resistance. Oscar describes a "ripple effect" when he describes his understanding of change and how that change ripples from a central message, with each ripple representing a point of negotiation. His use of the term "ripple effect" for me implies that the change messages are structured hierarchically, in that the stone thrown in the centre of the pond is where the loudest or most important message starts. Probably, in this metaphor, it would start with a political message; in the words of Oscar, it would come from "the DfES or Ofsted". However, despite this, the use of a metaphor suggests a powerful message is being made. Oscar still considers the role of the school as one which interprets that message in terms of the school's context and his needs, and not that the message will be adhered to without question.

Oscar begins to explain *"Yeah, I mean, you know, there is always a ripple effect [moving hands to show undulating nature of a ripple] to anything which happens in the DfES or Ofsted. There is always a **ripple effect** [repeated point, said with emphasis] and the better schools I think, and I would have to say [slows pace of speech] that this is our school, is one of the, the approach that is, [quickens pace] is that they will manage those ripples to suit their school."*

These ripples, for Oscar as a “middle leader”, are “managed” according to the departmental “principles” as he perceives them, making the clear distinction between what might be the over-arching principles of the organisation compared to the principles of Oscar’s department.

He continues after a sigh with a long pause, emphasising thinking taking place *“Again, there is a combination of factors involved here; as a middle leader, and one with increasing experience and confidence in what I do. I will also manage my own ripples.”*

Oscar is preparing the listener, me, for what is to come in that he is giving himself the credibility to challenge and resist organisational impositions (Jarvis, 2010). He continues with a slow pace, emphasising his thinking as well as emphasising the importance of each point being made *“So if there is a new initiative in the school to do something then I will make it suit what our principles are within the department.”*

Oscar goes on to suggest that here the collaborative element of managing the ripples is important to him. He begins by speaking as if with the voice of another person *“‘How can we work together to come up with some ideas...’ [back to his voice] well, actually this is how it will fit in in humanities and this is how we can make it work here.”*

Oscar emphasises how he sees his role within that middle section of the organisational hierarchy as essential, as it is here that decisions made at the top of the hierarchy must be managed “before they get to have an impact on the students”.

Oscar states *“And you do have to, erm, [slows pace] consider what people are asking you to do, [quickens pace, emphasising the clarity of the point being made] **you see I think the middle leadership role, it is critical.** Erm, we are the clearing house for ideas if you like, erm, before they get to have an impact on students.”*

In order to do this, Oscar negotiates in a variety of ways, in that he may “place more emphasis” on certain initiatives or parts of that initiative.

Oscar makes his first point *“That sometimes will mean that I will place more emphasis on [pace quickens] certain initiative. [he emphasises ‘parts’, louder and quicker than other words] Or certain **parts** [emphasised] of those initiative than on others.”*

Furthermore, Oscar describes how the person involved in delivering the messages of change alters how he negotiates.

Oscar makes his second point *“Erm, the other contributory factor is, erm, [long pause and the long ‘how’ shows that what he is about to say may be controversial] how much conviction there is behind the initiative in the first place, [pace quickens] in terms of the person who is leading the initiative.”*

Oscar also demonstrates how he negotiates depending on his judgements regarding the reasoning behind an initiative and what the initiative involves.

Oscar makes his third point, his pace continuing to be quicker than usual *“And the reasons for the initiative.”*

It appears that Oscar is making a judgement on the size of this “ripple” and correspondingly he decides to alter his negotiation in that if, in his judgement, the ripple is important, he negotiates less than if he regards the ripple as unimportant, when he negotiates a lot.

He continues in a quick pace making his fourth point *“What the initiative is about, so, for example, [slows pace to emphasise his meaning] an initiative about being involved more in the local community is likely to have less weight behind it than an initiative to with, erm, [long pause as he tries to think of an example, when he does the pace quickens] students with special educational needs. Erm, [continues with quick pace] because there are things which are bread and butter and if the school has a policy on every need, we need to take notice.”*

Oscar clearly makes the distinction between his perceptions of the importance of “enrichment” compared to a necessary “part of the everyday fabric of the lesson by lesson life”. Here I am unclear whether this is a negotiation made by Oscar based on principles, or whether he is just deciding on the basis of how the organisation monitors and evaluates the work of its staff. If an initiative is part of the everyday life of the school, then it is likely that it will be monitored more intensely, but if on the other hand it is an extra feature, it is less likely to be highly monitored. This suggests that Oscar’s principles are less legitimate as they concern how well or otherwise his department will cope when being monitored.

Oscar continues with quick pace, making his fifth point *“And it needs to be carried out and the message then is very clear and there are some things that enrich the curriculum and enrich the school’s experience, [pace now slows, as if he is unsure he is on the*

*right train of thought] but which therefore, because they're not necessarily part of the fabric of lesson by lesson life."*

Oscar rounds his point off with a long pause, for thinking time, then speaks in a jovial tone, but not as a joke, as his facial expression suggest this is a serious point *"erm, they're not easy to ignore."*

Oscar also acknowledges that his "line manager" has an expectation that these forms of negotiation will take place and are therefore an accepted, tolerated and encouraged part of organisational practice.

He explains *"when my line manager asks me about [quickens pace to show words in another's voice] 'initiatives and whole school initiatives, and how they are represented in humanities and how they are being carried out in humanities.' [returns to slower pace] I have always found that whatever version [long pause, emphasising thinking] we are, erm, involved in in humanities it's always very much appreciated and seen as being: well that's how [pace quickens to highlight the answer] we need to do it in humanities then. And I guess the same must be [true] around the school."*

Oscar adds to this, suggesting that it takes place throughout the school and this diversity is justified according to the context of each situation. Again, emphasising the importance of middle leaders in interpreting initiatives, with regard to their specific context.

As he says *"I think that the view is taken that middle leaders are there [pause] to be that [pause] **interpretative** [second pause, highlights the word] point if you like. To say well, you want us to do this, fine, this is how it will work in our area."*

Oscar finalises his comments on the negotiation of change messages by suggesting that the tolerance of negotiation exists because of the variety of leaders in the hierarchy above him in the organisation, suggesting that there are as many "different interpretations of an initiative as there are senior leaders in the school".

*"In practice I find that, erm, [long pause as he finds his words] there are as many different interpretations of an initiative as there are senior leaders in the **school**. [‘school’ emphasised to show a conclusion to his point]"*

Oscar completes this part of his narrative with a flourish, further suggesting that negotiation can mean ignoring organisational instruction that does not suit his context.

*“And if you focus on that and ignore the rubbish, then you’re alright.”*

In summary, Oscar imagines that within his community of practice there are numerous opportunities for members to negotiate and re-negotiate meaning, although he appears to place himself as a central negotiator, more critical to the institution than others.

Furthermore, he outlines that this is done openly in some instances at a local, departmental level, but more subversively at other times in a three-way process: Firstly, by emphasising some aspects more than others, secondly by emphasising some parts only, and thirdly by choosing to listen to some and ignore others. Oscar justifies his negotiation by calling on certain ‘principles’, which he alludes to at various times and which he indicates as his rights and duties towards the good management of his team. Oscar acknowledges a ‘ripple’ effect of negotiation, whereby the closer to the centre of the decision, the ripples are larger and so harder to negotiate, but the further from the centre, the ripples have been re-negotiated many times, making further re-negotiation easier. Therefore, as a decision or initiative moves down the institutional hierarchy from head teacher to the leadership team, negotiation of meaning takes place, then from the leadership team to middle leaders, further negotiation takes place, so the original message the head teacher sent can become a very different entity once it reaches the teachers. Oscar appears not to recognise that further negotiation will take place at the teacher’s level.

Wendy also negotiates and demonstrates this, when she discusses the notion of what she calls “whingers and moaners”, in that it is this group of staff who object to an organisational change that can influence that change in so far as some of the rules are removed.

Wendy explains *“But I think that they announced that [emphasised] at a briefing. That, that had been taken away now. But I think it was **because** [emphasised] quite a few of us...”*

I seek to clarify *“Oh right, it’s been taken away now. Oh, right.”*

She continues *“Yes. That rule has been taken away, yes.”*



Furthermore, Wendy considers the power of the whingers and moaners to be extended, because some of this group belong to the senior leadership community of practice.

After some consideration she says *“that’s interesting. I think that some whingers and moaners are on the SLT. [faster pace] Some people who would object to things like that are actually on the SLT and so would question the... not the motives, but the decisions of the other SLT members.”*

Wendy describes how negotiation within her community of practice currently takes place in an informal setting, as opposed to a formal setting such as a meeting, something which used to happen but not any longer.

I seek clarification *“Right, okay. So... Right. And that’s not on an agenda; that’s not in a meeting; that’s just... there they are in the corridor...”*

Wendy explains using an example *“Yes. [emphasised] [faster pace and higher volume] That’s the difference. Yes. [usual pace and tone] Whereas it used to be at a meeting: [as if spoken by another] “What do you think about, I don’t know, changing the school uniform to have no ties?” Right? And everybody discusses it, yeah, it’s a good idea, yeah, because all we’re doing is nagging kids about ties and actually, that’s not important and... blar, blar, blar, [as if spoken by another] “Yes okay, good idea, let’s do that”. Next year: [low volume and in another’s voice] “There are no more ties”.”*

Wendy elaborates on this difference with significant signs of irritation that no consultation prior to a decision takes place, leading to frustrating consequences and the need for people to “whine”.

Wendy describes the difference *“Whereas nowadays, it does not happen like that. Nowadays, it’s er, [pause] somebody goes “I think that students should not be allowed to wear leggings” so an SLT person decides that and sends out an email and says: students are no longer allowed to wear leggings and we all go: [high pitched inquisitive voice] “Oh really? Why’s that, then?” [slower pace] and then we have a battle with our kids and then we have a whinge about that to somebody else on the senior leadership team and then maybe six months later, when 12 other people have had a whine to people on the senior leadership team, it goes away.”*

Wendy is articulating how her method of negotiation in terms of whinging and moaning gets results, but this method is not a *joint enterprise* and, for me, forms inadequate organisational decision making.

In summary, Wendy negotiates by finding a voice in her community, via her notion of ‘whingers and moaners’. This form of negotiation is successful in that some decisions are changed, especially when the whingers and moaners also belong to the leadership community of practice. However, this form of negotiation is always informal and so it is not organisationally recognised. As such, it is not a joint enterprise and is seen as a weak form of community voice, as it only appears after a decision has taken place, thereby forcing resistance rather than embracing collective negotiation prior to decision making. Consequently, decision making is currently perceived as weak and changes are given low status by teachers, as they do not comply with their notions of inclusive, democratic forms of decision making.

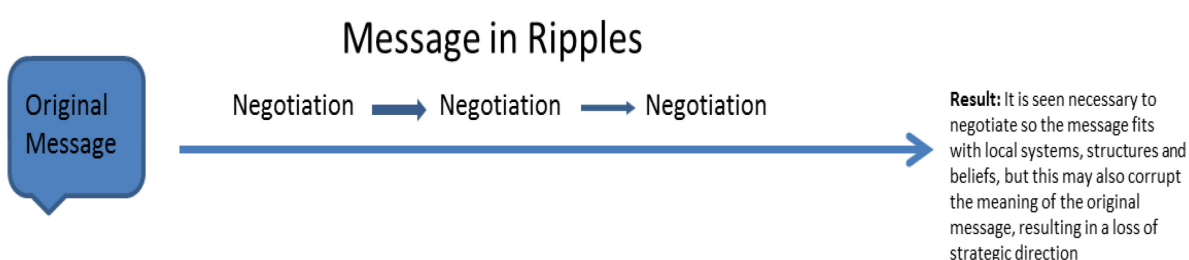
In conclusion, what both Wendy and Oscar describe are organisations which limit formal opportunities for communally negotiated meaning, something which has been replaced with hierarchical structures to inform, instruct, or monitor staff. Hence, teachers are forced to find alternative routes for negotiation, they are forced underground and because these routes are informal and organisationally unrecognised, they become the only weapons of resistance that teachers have. However, such resistance, via ‘moaning and whinging’ or via a varied response to ‘ripples’ is undemocratic and, for me, is an ineffective form of resistance.

### *Summary of the findings regarding the practice resistance of teachers*

Alongside the forms of opposition found in previous sections is a form of resistance to that change not just philosophically, but practically. Oscar demonstrates his power as a ‘middle manager’ by describing the three ways he can mediate between what is sent down from an authority higher than his own and what he chooses to offer to “his team” below. Initially, he describes how he can “ignore” some messages from powerful sources above himself and how he can transpose his own authority on certain agendas by placing an “onus” on some things rather than others. He also gives the impression that despite being a “middle leader”, he can influence others. Finally, he appears to acknowledge that decision making power only travels downwards within a hierarchy.

In some sections of the interview Oscar acknowledges that there is a hierarchy of power and at each level there is some degree of self-delusion. Plus, there exists a spectrum of negotiation, where at one end, there is little or no negotiation and at the other, there is a lot of negotiation. Oscar describes a ‘ripple’ effect, with ever diminishing ripples from the centre of power, where the ripples decrease in amplitude the further from the centre of power they are, until there is little trace of the central decision. Yet he acknowledges that this system enables a top-down decision to be managed to suit the school. Furthermore, meso- (organisational) power appears to understand that negotiation will take place and this is tolerated, but at other times, meso-power demands no negotiation, Oscar appears to agree with this but does not acknowledge that individual negotiation will still take place (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Ripple Effect of Messages [Oscar]

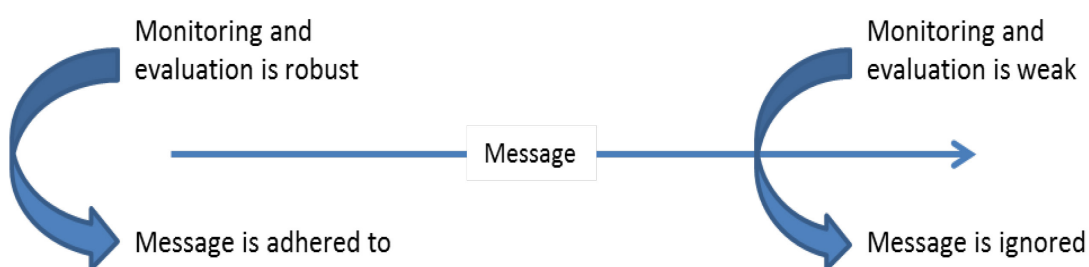


Is there a hierarchy of negotiation? If so, then this includes an element of self-delusion, in that individuals within a certain hierarchy must believe the tier below is doing as asked, because the tier above expects that; therefore, they delude themselves that it is happening. In order to do this, they have to create the illusion that ‘all is well’ to the tier above. If the tier above accepts this illusion, then harmony exists within the school.

An individual in a tier knows that they negotiate, but does the perception of others’ negotiation stop at each tier? Do they believe that ‘I’ve negotiated on your behalf so you don’t have to, therefore you will not’? Oscar appears to believe so, but for me this is unlikely and negotiation to the bottom of the hierarchy will continue right up to the teacher-pupil interface.

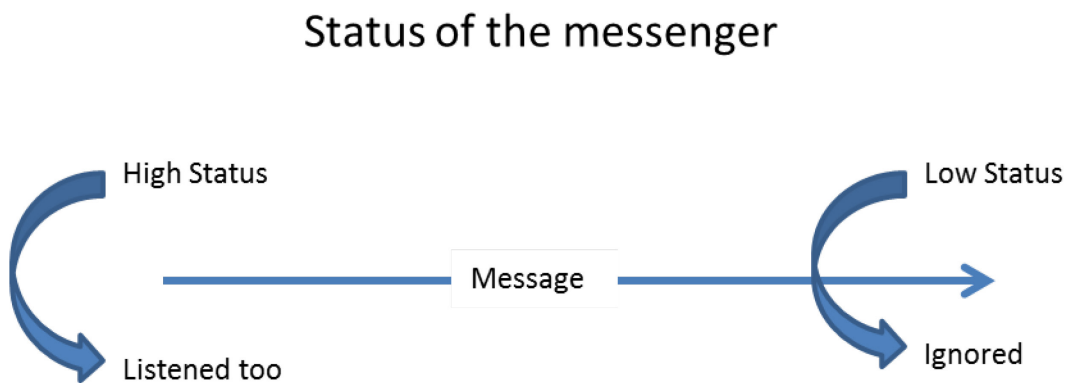
Moreover, the spectrum of negotiation, as mentioned above, ranging from one end, where there is no or little negotiation, to the other, where a lot of negotiation takes place, appears to correspond with the degree of monitoring and evaluation that takes place. Oscar appears to accept a degree of conformity to behaviour systems and structures because ‘everyone has to do it for it to work’, but this is monitored by a computer system and so anyone out of step with expectations can be easily identified. At the other end of the spectrum, the *Assessment for learning* monitoring and evaluation is limited to irregular lesson observations (with early warnings) and the sharing of schemes of work with a line manager, and so is less easily monitored, as Figure 2 illustrates:

Figure 2. The Monitoring of a Message



Furthermore, Oscar appears to suggest that individuals within the leadership team have different statuses and that different messages from the leadership team also have different status. He suggests that some leaders have a high leadership cachet, or perceived status, and so they are listened to and responded to, whilst others have a low leadership cachet and are ignored. Likewise, different messages have a varying cachet in that they may be acted upon or ignored (see Figure 3):

Figure 3. The Status of the Messenger



Oscar appears to perceive that if individuals on the senior leadership team have similar understandings and expectations of certain agendas, then negotiation of that agenda is low, but if individuals on the senior leadership team have varying understandings and expectations, then negotiation is high. It appears that, if high expectations exist, based on authoritative understanding and knowledge, then people respond, but if there are high expectations based on a lack of authority with limited knowledge, then there is little response. These forms are accepted as part of organisational practice and this tolerance of negotiation may be a result of the variety of interpretations placed on an ‘initiative’ by the various leaders in the organisation.

Wendy negotiates by finding a voice in her community, via her notion of ‘whingers and moaners’. This form of negotiation is successful in that some decisions are changed, especially when the whingers and moaners also belong to the leadership community of practice. However, this form of negotiation is always informal and so it is not organisationally recognised. Therefore, it is not a joint enterprise and is seen as a weak form of community voice, as it only appears after a decision has taken place, thereby forcing resistance, rather than embracing collective negotiation prior to decision making. Hence, decision making, as it is currently perceived, is weak and changes are given low status by teachers, as they do not comply with their notions of inclusive, democratic forms of decision making.

### 5.11 Going back to the participants

With these findings in mind, I wanted to go back to the participants and ask them for comments. I found it extremely difficult to summarise what I had found in a coherent way, which could be understood by practising teachers. However, I wanted to include an opportunity for further participation to ensure that my voice within this study was not the dominant one and that I had correctly portrayed what was said during the interviews. To this end, I asked the participants for comments on seven areas as set out below. The comments returned outlined agreement to all areas and I have added a few quotes to summarise this.

1. Currently there are poor flows of communication in our schools

Betty: “Yes”

Wendy: “Lack of consultation is the most important aspect of this”

2. Leadership roles can change people

Betty: “Absolutely”

Wendy: “Yes absolutely” “They can inspire or destroy self-esteem/enthusiasm”

3. Evaluation tools used on teachers;

- a) weaken the pupil experience

- b) take away professional power

- c) create a large gap between everyday practice and expectations during observation

Betty: “I accept that they are an essential part of school improvement and general accountability”

Wendy: “The chase for better results means we have lost individualism and sometimes enthusiasm in our classrooms”

4. Monitoring and evaluation of teachers and pupils measures what is easy to measure, not what is useful

Betty: “the data driven focus is what leads me to feel most disaffection with my profession”

Wendy: “It does not measure how much enjoyment students gain or whether it inspires them to do something with/in their lives”

5. Global performance data is driving change but not meeting the needs of pupils locally

Betty: “The narrow focus on assessment damages professional integrity as a whole”

Wendy: “If you have the same targets for schools in areas of different social class – how is this fair?”

6. Current professional development opportunities align with the organisation, not the individual teacher

Betty: “Not extensively so”

Wendy: “Yes, I’ve had to sit through several twilight trainings about things that: 1. I already do, 2. Are irrelevant to subjects I teach”

7. Teachers resist change

Betty: “Much change in education is politically driven, based on flimsiest of evidence and ultimately wasteful”

Wendy: “Not true I don’t think”

Whilst it is reassuring to note that the participants do agree with my findings, I acknowledge the flaws behind asking questions in such a way, as they appear loaded with meaning. Despite this, I was left taken aback by some of the vehement answers given, enhancing my aforementioned notion of opposition. Although I also note Wendy’s comment that teachers do not resist change, something which for me suggests her sense of powerlessness within her own profession.

## **Summary**

In this section, I have described how the participants believe their organisational communication is flawed because it has been reduced, resulting in a sense of a loss of

professional power. It is also thought of as creating a poorer organisation, which no longer develops its community or itself. The managerialised tools of monitoring and evaluation are not valued by the participants and are regarded as poor forms of organisational success. Because of the gradual destruction of the communication pathways, the participants describe new forms of communities of practice that they need to engage with in order to be heard, but these are unofficial. Hence, resistance is described in the form of negotiation or non-compliance. The accountability measures are seen as flawed because the outcome measures are regarded as non-comparable and moreover, the focus on this flawed system harms pupils as well as teachers, because it is seen as a poor form of education. Therefore, the new forms of managerialisation have denuded the participants' notions of their professional identity. Finally, when asked, the participants agreed.



## Chapter 6 – Discussion

### Introduction

In this chapter, I draw together what my participants described in the findings, within the theoretical framework previously outlined, alongside a contemporary discussion regarding education in England in 2015 from the literature review. As such, I will first discuss how the participants' descriptions show impacts on their lived experiences at a macro level, at a state level, critically discussing market forces in schools. Then I discuss how, at a meso level, the institutional goals of education and how participants critically describe these. Next I discuss, at an organisational level, Wenger's notion of a community of practice (1989), according to the descriptions of the participants. In the last section, I return to the macro level to understand how the changes described by the participants have been accepted by society in general, before returning to a micro level to ask why the participants resist, examining the nature of the doxaic clash.

### 6.1 Neoliberalism - Market Forces in Schools

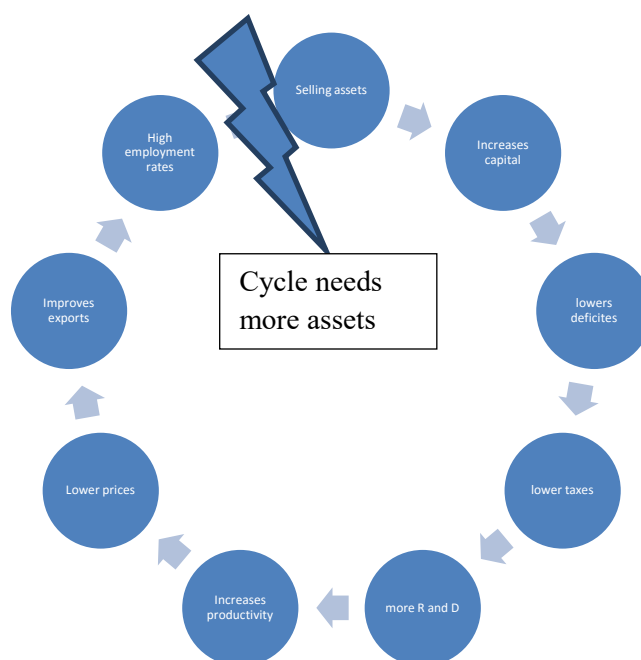
In this section, I have contextualised the participants' notions, as outlined in the findings, to ground their experiences within neoliberalism and its wider implications. As such, I outline why I consider neoliberalism has altered the way governments function for the benefit of their people, and so my participants, such that Rousseau's notion of a *social contract*, building on the work of Hobbes (1588-1679), has been eroded and replaced by market forces.

As we have seen in section 1.3.9, Hayek's (1944) neoliberal economic proposals go beyond Smith's laissez-faire economics, beyond the invisible hand, to suggest that it is the role and indeed responsibility of governments to become actively involved in stimulating and creating opportunities for marketisation, competition and all the constituent parts of capitalism, like a government gauntlet covering that invisible hand (Smith 1723-1790), and manipulating it. With this in mind, economic policy began to shake away the underpinnings of the economic outlook largely associated with Keynes (1888-1946), whose economic philosophy argued that a wealthy middle class contributed to the economy via its purchasing power, such that lowering unemployment and raising wages improved the economy. However, as we have seen a new way of

thinking economically, the neoliberal way of thinking (Harvey, 2005), has taken its place.

This new notion was subsequently latched onto by politicians in the form of Bobbitt's virtuous circle (2003), which promotes the notion of privatising state assets, which increases capital for the state, thereby lowering the state's deficits, which in turn lowers inflation, attracting capital, lowering borrowing costs, which lowers deficits and so on. This cycle of lowering interest rates and attracting capital allows for lower tax rates, so business can then invest money otherwise spent on taxes into research and development, increasing productivity, lowering prices, improving exports and resulting in high employment rates, as set out below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. The Reductionist State (Bobbitt, 2003)



In the UK, once the railways had gone, closely followed by the utilities and other state owned assets, attention was turned towards the welfare institutions.

This was begun by creating markets via notions of choice, through the misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984) of performativity, thereby blurring the distinction between the *welfare state* and privately run welfare systems, paid for by the state (Jones, 2014). Added to this were the great opportunities for those *in the know* to make vast sums of money, as we saw in section 2.9.

For me, this is where neoliberalism has taken capitalism too far, in that it is no longer socially just because it is based on market forces (Harvey, 2005, Hayek, 1944), not morality; notions which bring us back to the participants' understandings of how education has lost its holistic approach, in that it no longer serves the welfare of pupils but only serves a narrow focus of performativity. As Theresa says "*The current assessment; it's just a **nightmare** [emphasised]*". For this reason, I believe, via the participant's descriptions, such as Kelvin "*I was adamantly against. I **resisted** [emphasised] at **every** [emphasised] nook and cranny, I just resisted. I just don't think it's fair*", that neoliberalism has distanced society from Rousseau's notion of the social contract whereby we, the people of the state, comply with the states institutional rules on the understanding that the state will protect and look after us.

*"Each of us puts his person and his full power in common under the supreme direction of general will: and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole"* (Rousseau, Book 1, Chapter 6, 2010 edition).

But I ask: where is the *supreme direction* now? It is certainly not a *general will*, as the participants describe their loss of autonomy. As Wendy describes "*But I know people that do **every one** [emphasised] of those TLCs, because they don't want to **appear** [emphasised] not to be following the rules. But those **aren't** [emphasised] the rules.*" It is market forces that direct us, apparently beyond the State's control (Bobbitt, 2003). And so for me, the social contract no longer protects us; we are left with only market forces, an economic construct which is compassionless and cold, and a system devoid of human interaction, hence the participants ontological *insecurity* (Giddens, 1986). Consequently, neoliberalism has torn up the social contract, one which since the war, was developed fully into a welfare contract and included health, education, and social care, as well as safety via the military and police. Furthermore, with a construct such as a global market, it appears the whole world, not just a state, can do nothing to save its people except to acquiesce to a superior force (Hay, 2002); one questioned by the participants in terms of their dismissing the notions of international league tables (DfES/DTi, 2003) such as Kelvin who says "*but I do think we're in a position where we want everyone to get ten A\*s [pause] and then what do they do with those ten A\*s... [trails off]*". But then, of course, this globalisation concept is only a social construct (Gergen, 2009).

Finally, I will return to the literature review and consider again Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991). Foucault's thinking is essentially pre-neoliberal in that he saw governmentality as the rationale by which to regulate and shape the 'free' individual to such an extent that individuals govern their own conduct. As Theresa says "*You were **trusted** [emphasised] to be a **professional**. [emphasised] Your PGCE and your degree actually **meant** [emphasised] something and it was very much... [pause] yes, you were... [pause] you know, they had high **expectations** [emphasised] of you.*"

According to Foucault, institutional performance was agreed in a so-called 'government at arm's length' (1991) way, where the spaces of economic and civil activity were delegated to bureaucratised professional authorities such as the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers, or the Schools Council (abolished in 1985 and 1982 respectively). It was seen by Foucault that these independent bodies instigated programmes, strategies and regimes to maintain the wellbeing of society. In England's case, it was these professional bodies that maintained our welfare society, and in the case of education, these bodies maintained teacher and school standards. However, neoliberal use of new managerialism to industrialise the welfare state in preparation for privatisation and the consequent shrinkage of the state moves governmentality away from the notion of Foucault's 'conduct of conduct', towards conduct via performativity (Lyotard, 1984).

As such, the new managerialism (Clarke et al., 2000) found in educational institutions can be seen as a weak form of governance; not self-policing, but back to a previous notion of state policing via enforcement, as Wendy says "*in case... [pause] I don't know, they get **sacked**. [emphasised]*". The participants describe 'low trust' chains (Clarke et al., 2000) of performance within a formal hierarchy and it is these chains which enforce conduct, chains based upon supposedly quantifiable criteria such as learning.

Furthermore, 'conduct of conduct' could be seen as beneficial to society, because it is socially constructed by those involved, so people opt in via discussions and debates, thereby creating a rationality which suits a particular context, in this case education. However, what the participants describe is performativity based on the fear of capability or the fear of crises (not enough human capital to meet the demands of globalisation).

For the participants, this new rationality is based on the fear of something bad happening to them, or society not operating on a rationale based on improvement.

As such, I believe that Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991) is now due for a reappraisal, one which considers the new managerialisation agenda and the small state government, existing only to support market forces.

In the next section, I will outline how the participants have described a change in schools, to low trust chains of monitoring, which focus on measuring, not adding value to pupils (Biesta, 2009) and are therefore costly and inefficient. So the changes seen are for ideological reasons, not because of reasons of efficiency. The ideology is focused on a reductionist state (Bobbitt, 2003), so the low trust chains are there to ensure inputs and outputs are measurable (Evans, 2008), so that schools can become profit making companies (Croft, 2011). However this can be seen as a weak form of governance.

## **6.2 The Misrecognition of Efficiency**

In this section, I demonstrate how notions of efficiency, purportedly brought about by competition, are seen as false by the participants, such that in order to compete, schools must managerialise and marketise, and these organisational structures are expensive.

In order to consider where we might be headed, I want to build on the participants' experiences of living with performativity via notions of inputs and outputs, and transpose these on to the neoliberal ideology (Harvey, 2005), especially considering Bobbitt's virtuous circle (2003). For me, the misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984) of efficiency stems from the neoliberal desire to create industrialised models within welfare institutions with the overtly stated intention of reducing costs and so reducing the 'burden on taxpayers'. Jones (2014) noted that working relations between unions and politicians known as 'facility time' was abandoned despite the obvious savings made by avoiding industrial action. It was abandoned because of the neoliberal ideology wanting a reductionist state so the governmental support systems to maintain dialogue with unions and so save money, was withdrawn. For me, this shows how neoliberalism has moved beyond its stated intention of reducing costs, i.e. being efficient. As such, I suggest, via the participants' descriptions and the literature, that we have reached a point where neoliberalism in our schools is concerned with its ideology, not with cost saving and efficiency.

This odd notion of neoliberal efficiency resonated with me during my analysis, when the participants described changed modes of communication. They described the change as having gone from a two-way flow of communication to a one-way flow, resulting in a loss of voice and so a sense of a loss of autonomy for teachers. As Wendy says about her meeting notes *“They go nowhere. Just within the department”*. However, the participants maintained that meeting structures continued, but were used as monitoring devices. Furthermore, Wendy implied that the tiers of management didn’t used to exist, *“In fact, there didn’t even used to be kind of [pause] that middle management layer [pause] I don’t think”*, something to which I can attest. When I started teaching, my secondary school had a head teacher, a deputy for the curriculum, a deputy for pastoral matters and various heads of department. Today, leadership teams can be up to ten people strong in large schools. These teams accompany the faculty leaders who oversee department leaders, alongside year leaders, key stage leaders and pastoral leaders.

Moreover, schools have leaders for special needs pupils and disadvantaged pupils. Schools employ an array of support staff to gather, classify and evaluate pupil data. All these roles have become necessary because of managerialisation. All these roles are necessary so that each tier of management can monitor the tier below and feed back to the tier above: this is Clarke’s (2000) notion of low trust chains. Thinking back to my rural farming background, my grandfather had a saying about efficiency: “too many pig weighers, not enough pig fatteners”. For me, these tiers of low trust chains are the pig weighers; they measure pupils’ progress. I wonder what our schools would be like for the pupils if all the people in the roles outlined above turned their attention to teaching and learning, to the pig fattening. The issue is that these chains didn’t used to exist; they are about creating an industrial model with inputs and outputs – school factories. These chains are only necessary because of marketisation and competition, and they are expensive and inefficient.

Choice, competition and marketisation (Robertson, 2001) are expensive. Schools have to compete with other local schools through advertising. Popular schools have to expand, which requires funding to build, and schools who lose pupils face the cost of housing those pupils in schools too large and expensive to heat, as well as the extra costs of providing redundancy for the teachers no longer needed. Therefore, the upheavals that choice creates are expensive and so inefficient.

Consequently, neoliberal managerialisation and marketisation, as described by the participants, is not about efficiency or cost-cutting, or improving the pupil experience; but they are about an ideology.

As I have acknowledged, this study is a snapshot; as much an historical document as social research, but I must also point out that once this is written and is gathering digital dust in a thesis repository, neoliberalism will continue to move on; continue its tectonic pace to industrialise welfare (Bourdieu, 1998). For this reason I must draw the reader's attention to a possible future, one already materialising in academies, in free schools, in trusts throughout the land; the notion of profit in state schools.

We have already seen how the edges of political decency have been blurred by profit-making politicians taking chunks of government money via public/private initiatives. Now we have an industrialised model of schools with inputs and outputs, so that anyone can run them. As long as each child comes with a price on their head, and as long as the outputs are agreeable to government, a profit can be made. Look at Croft's 2011 work: *Profit Making Schools or Policy Exchange* (2012), *Social Enterprise Schools; A profit-Sharing Model for the State-funded School System*. The title says it all. Throw in the American notion of vouchers, where parents can top up the voucher to further blur the edges between public and private, and we will have a fully-fledged profit making educational system. A three tiered system will exist, with the poor at the bottom of the heap (as usual); the aspiring middle classes throwing money at schools in an attempt to improve their child's education and a top tier; who will carry on as before. Yet again, we will see what was once *collective wealth* being passed on to individuals (Jones, 2014). Plus, there is the likelihood of a poorer education due to the potential of corporate failure leading to school closures, an increase in social segregation and the narrowing of educational outputs (Amsler, 2015). Moreover, social mobility will be diminished, closing the door to generations of wealth creators via creativity, entrepreneurship, etc. But I have raced on ahead; let me draw you back and consider these industrial *outputs*.

In this section, I have attempted to show how efficiency is not the *raison d'être* of neoliberal choice, marketisation and competition, but that it is a reductionist state (Bobbitt, 2003), via selling off schools to profit making organisations, releasing

collective wealth to individuals. Next, I will outline how the measures we use to judge schools, pupils and teachers are flawed, and need immediate reappraisal.

### 6.3 Misrecognition of the Outputs

In this section, I discuss how the current method of measuring school outputs is seen as flawed by the participants (Kelvin “*what do they do with those ten A\*s*”) and I tentatively suggest a different method with which to judge schools.

Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) seeks to commodify children; to make them a resource with which a state can survive within a globalised economy (Hay, 2002), just like iron ore or fertile land. Currently, the commodification involves exam results, via testing, something described by the participants as being flawed for most of our pupil population, as well as being seen as inadequate for industry, something which “*really annoys*” Wendy.

Inequalities exist within our current system in that certain categories of pupils underachieve and this is unfair (Ofsted, 2012), such that the managerialisation of our schools can be seen as morally justifiable. As Giddens and Diamond (2005) argued, the UK is a meritocracy because all our pupils are objectively and therefore equally, judged according to their talents and abilities, suggesting social class is now less important than ever. However, an increasingly alarming picture contradicting this notion is developing, summarised in a National Equality Panel [NEP] report (Hills, 2010), which outlines ‘deep seated and systematic differences in economic outcomes’ between gender, ethnicity, social class and geography. Hence, after 27 years, since the Education Act of 1988 introduced neoliberal notions of choice, competition and marketization, nothing appears to have changed; notions described as being “*inherently unfair*” by Oscar. Moreover, Nobel Prize winning economist, Stiglitz (2015), suggests with compelling evidence that there is a “strong relationship” between states further along the neoliberal journey such as the USA, and inequality (Stiglitz, 2015). Stiglitz goes so far as to reason that increased marketisation leads to more inequality; something hard to deny in the UK as we see the gap between the rich and the poor widening (Hills, 2010).

Surely, with so much money and effort going into our industrialised schools, the outputs should be rising. But they are not, especially according to OECD reports, although these reports are considered by the participants as being dubious at best, as Kelvin describes “*Well I think the rationale is: they compare us with the Finns or the Chinese or the*



*Singaporeans. This is where we **are** [emphasised] and we'd like to be **there** [emphasised] and the only way to get **there** [emphasised] is by giving more **tests** [emphasised] and doing more **levels** [emphasised]*". This is especially so when one considers enumerated outputs such as GCSEs or A-Levels, because they fail to take into account cultural deprivation theory, material deprivation lowering cultural capital, plus a hidden curriculum which, from a Marxist perspective, highlights middle class dominance in the educational system, alienating and failing to inspire the working class.

So I find myself coming back to the issues discussed in section 2.5, which were questioned by Oscar in terms of social context, in that it is "*too complicated to make [them] fair*"; that is the qualitative/quantitative debate. This is well-trodden ground, so I see little point in going over it again, except to say that I see the quantifying of intelligence fundamentally flawed because of what I outlined in Chapter Two, but I do accept that others also fundamentally question qualitative; perhaps a compromise can be found. Or is it too complicated, as Oscar suggests? As Neil Carmichael, the new chair of the Commons Education Committee said: "I want us to be at the cutting edge of producing new ideas in education" (Independent, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2015). Others want that compromise too, but in different fields. For example, a team at Warwick University has been working on a compromise within healthcare services. Despite medicine being considered the bastion of the positivist quantifiable methodologies, such as the double blind randomised controlled trial; many working in healthcare accept that this is often not enough. How can you quantify the most efficient way to wipe someone's bottom? Researchers may measure the pressure put on the tissue and the number of wipes needed, but everyone recognises that other things must be considered such as the embarrassment, humiliation, degradation and fear involved. Moreover, quantitatively a death is just a number, but qualitatively a death can be a 'good death', with shared decision making giving the dying patient and the relatives a voice.

In education, we may focus our attention on the 'disadvantaged' pupils in terms of their performance, but how transformative is the love and care of a form tutor compared to the grading of a maths test. Researchers at Warwick have proposed *values based practice* (VBP), which is a clinical skills-based approach for working with complex and often conflicting values within healthcare. For me, these complex and conflicting values are the essence of what my participants have described, so I feel it is worth considering the VBP as a model for educational research and subsequent practice; one which may

not appease the quantitative advocates, but at least it offers an approach they may see as appropriate to add into the methodologies mix. Below is a section taken from the VBP website. Read the three points, but place the setting and context within education:

- *The point of VBP: rather than giving us answers as such, VBP aims to support balanced decision making within frameworks of shared values appropriate to the situation in question.*
- *The premise of VBP: the basis for balanced decision making in VBP is the premise of mutual respect for differences of values.*
- *The process of VBP: VBP supports decision making through good process rather than prescribing pre-set right outcomes.*

With the mounting evidence that the quantitative methodologies and measurements in education are not providing us with useful evidence on how to move forward, I propose we think differently about our outputs. Others agree. John Cridland, the former director-general of the CBI recently complained that schools are operating too much like “exam factories” and are failing to produce “rounded and grounded” young people with the self-confidence needed for the world of work (Independent, Sunday 19th July, 2015). But it is not only the CBI that keeps reminding us that our pupils exit the system lacking communication skills, creativity etc., it is also the participants {Wendy: “*they’re going to have to manage themselves when they go into that job*”, me as a parent and even the pupils themselves.

In this section, I have briefly outlined how the measurements we use in our current education system are flawed, yet are believed by many, so the next section looks at how our understandings can be altered.

*“How much superior an education based on free action and personal responsibility is to one relying on outward authority” Einstein*

#### **6.4 The Cultural Hegemony of Neoliberalism**

In this section, I discuss the language used to construct ways of thinking. As such, I critically discuss the participants’ perspectives via Williams’ (1976) notion of controlling the *key words* and Gramsci’s notions of a *cultural hegemony* (1971).

As we have seen in sections 1.3.9, 2.4.1 and 6.1, neoliberalism is concerned with reducing the size of the state and therefore governmental involvement in people's lives by selling off state assets (Bobbitt, 2003), thereby returning choice to individuals when accessing services such as utilities, transport and increasingly welfare services such as health services and education. However, the notion of a reductionist state brought about by selling off the welfare institutions has been quite a challenge (Jones, 2012). Consider the warmth of feeling towards the NHS during the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics. To suggest the selling off of state assets as openly as I just have, would be politically unpalatable, hence the need to hide this paradigm.

Furthermore, our current educational system stratifies and divides, yet purports to concern individual rights. However, in doing so, it neglects the collective. Consequently, our children in school are divided by flawed notions of intelligence and our schools are likewise divided. As Oscar says "*I think that the way that our performance is evaluated is inherently unfair*". The basic notion is that if a child wants to do better, all they have to do is work harder, but only *if* they have the intelligence to do so, and if a school does not want to be at the bottom of the pile, then all it has to do is increase their exam results, even if its pupils lack the required *intelligence*. But of course, it is more complex than that, hence my participants' descriptions of their ontological *insecurity* (Giddens, 1986) and their alarm at the divisions our system creates.

So why do we have an educational system that divides us? It is because the philosophy underpinning the system is one of competition, of survival of the fittest, and therefore is a form of Social Darwinism linked to eugenics, such that the strong (economically and socially) should increase their wealth and power whilst the weak see their wealth and power decrease. This is a notion first put forward by Darwin's cousin Francis Galton (1822-1911), unsurprisingly, Galton noted that there was a disproportionate number of related individuals in the upper echelons of British society. Whilst we would now be critical of the theory due to its neglect of social contexts, at the time, it became an accepted notion, which then flipped so that if the wealthy and well-connected deserved to remain wealthy and well-connected then the poor and disadvantaged deserved to remain poor and disadvantaged and were therefore a liability to society. Hence the historic build-up of biological eugenics leading to the Nazi extermination of various underprivileged groups. Whilst I am not suggesting that our current educational policy is akin to the Nazi policy of extermination, I do note that life expectancy and education

are linked (Rogot et al., 1992) and that this link is currently increasing both in the USA (Meara et al., 2008) and the UK (Waldron, 2007), suggesting that the worst educated sections of society die young. Is this policy deliberate? It seems unlikely, but it is hard not to see the links, and certainly the neoliberal language has Social Darwinist overtones, such as the revival of the phrases: ‘the undeserving poor’ and ‘underclass’ theory (Murray, 1990), or in the words of Will Hutton, the welfare debate revolves “not around the universal principle, but about the principle of deservingness” (2012), which for me is a eugenic construct. Now consider the outcry against the Channel 4 production *Benefits Street*. My point is that both economic theory and social theory are forms of evolutionary theory. So how did we get here?

What my analysis of the participants’ lived experiences has highlighted to me, in an educational context, is a two pronged attack on teachers; notions which can be extended to other welfare institutions. The two-pronged attack come firstly in the form of what Williams calls “key words” (1976) and secondly what Gramsci notes as “cultural hegemony” (1971). Williams outlines how power in society can be built by controlling “key words”, in that if you control those, you control the hegemony. Gramsci saw his notion of “cultural hegemony” as a means of maintaining and legitimising the capitalist state and, although I have described that for me, neoliberalism is pushing capitalism further along a capitalist continuum, away from welfare liberalism and towards classical liberalism, I still think Gramsci’s notion is relevant here.

#### 1) Control the key words and you control the hegemony

Modern bureaucrats have always had their own language, which is used in a variety of ways, from causing alienation to outsiders to a form of institutional shorthand enabling reification to be communicated easily. Illich in 1977 commented:

“...even now some adults have the grace to blush when they slip into managerial pidgin English with terms such as policy making, social planning and problem solving”. (page 12)

For me, all these terms are now so well established in everyday managerial speak that they no longer seem pidgin but indigenous. However, Fairclough (2000) has noted changes in political language, which concern a central focus here: neoliberalism. In his book *New Labour, New Language*, Fairclough questions a range of political language

from the need to change a political party's title from Labour to New Labour, to avoiding terms such as socialism, something he describes as becoming the "dreaded 's'" according to New Labour politics. While Fairclough goes on to make insightful points about the language of Labour leaders, who attempted to convey values that would resonate with the electorate, such as decency, common sense and compassion, he makes a point relevant to this story in that it was made clear to New Labour politicians that they must not use the Tory term 'privatisation', but instead use 'public-private partnership'. Both are neoliberal notions, but it appears that there has been a deliberate policy of manipulating language to hide unpleasant economic concepts. Fairclough concludes;

"In other words, changing the name wasn't just reflecting a shift in political ideology; it was manipulating language to control public perception". (ibid, page 5)

This language manipulation and therefore control is rampant in our schools, such that choice is now associated with notions of freedom and meritocracy, that efficiency is linked to positivism, and competition to notions of Spencer's (1820-1903) *survival of the fittest*, therefore the strongest and best.

Fairclough makes another point about globalisation that is relevant here too. As I have already discussed, globalisation is a term used to strike fear in the electorate via notions of the state becoming weak if it cannot compete (Hay, 2002). And it was during New Labour, according to Fairclough (2000), that globalisation and "the new global economy" became "accomplished facts" such that "neoliberalism is something we have to live with" "there is no alternative" (ibid). For me, without an alternative, there is no opposition, no counterargument and therefore it becomes a powerful form of both economic and social control, and undemocratic. Yet the participants have articulated an opposition; something I cannot ignore.

Lewis – "it's the **wrong** [emphasised] motives."

Betty - "So I've always been very pro-state school since then. **But**, [emphasised] pro-the idea of state schools, not the current political ideology, [very sad tone] which disappoints me."

Wendy - "Are you **wanting** [emphasised] me to turn up to this meeting, or are you **inviting** [emphasised] me...?"

Kelvin – “*I was adamantly against. I **resisted** [emphasised] at **every** [emphasised] nook and cranny, I just resisted. I just don’t think it’s fair.*”

Theresa – “*I think that I’ve got the resilience and the integrity and **I know why I’m in** [emphasised] teaching.*”

Despite this apparent acceptance of neoliberalism, we have ‘free speech’ in this country, so an alternative can be developed and I hope this study will add to that ever-increasing voice calling for such. However, my voice and others will struggle to be heard because we have a new form of democracy now; a cyclical process attuned to the neoliberal agenda because of its individual wealth creating potential. Thus, neoliberalism releases collective wealth to individuals, those individuals fund think tanks, the think tanks feed the media, the media incites politicians, politicians change policies, individuals make money and the cycle begins again (Chomsky, 1999). And as we have seen, these individuals are often the politicians as well.

As such, the language of neoliberalism is used to constrain our thinking, ensuring the premise, a reductionist state, is hidden (Castree, 2006). It is covered by other words. We have seen the misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984) of words like *crisis* and its uses, as well as *globalisation* (Hay, 2002), so add *austerity* into the mix and it is hard to get a foothold on to any alternative. But reflecting on how my participants have described their lived experiences, such that they are seemingly at war with the current hegemony, we must find an alternative, which for me is an obligation. I don’t mean an attempt to negotiate the peripheral constructs, the globalisation, the crises, the austerity; I mean the grand narrative of a *reductionist state*.

- 2) Cultural hegemony; a means of maintaining and legitimising the capitalist state. (Gramsci, 1971)

Following on from the above section concerning the control of “key words” sits a similar control, one of methodologies and, as we have seen in the literature review, the dominant language has become that of the positivists; one where everything can be quantified and therefore ‘scientifically’ assessed (Hargreaves, 2001). This current dominance of numerical data is part of my participants’ lived experiences, yet they tentatively question it in terms of international standards data and in terms of how they, as humans, are commodified with numbers based on their performance. As Betty says

*“...then again, Ofsted are always changing what they want to see as... what is that mark of excellence”*. So in this section, I want to make two points based on Giddens’ notion of people being able to “act otherwise” (Giddens, 1986, page 14). My first point is that teachers are unable to act otherwise because of their inability to be critical of the positivist, quantitative methodology. For example, the Professional Standards for Teachers (2007) states that to be an excellent teacher, you must use local and national statistical data. But as Wendy states, *“you can’t judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree”*. My second point has been well voiced by my participants, in that they are unable to act otherwise because they are caught up in a managerialised organisation, which systematically blocks communication and commodifies their usefulness according to performativity judgements, thereby constraining any actions which do not fit this model.

Giddens said: “Rationalisation of action occurs as a process whereby the agent maintains a tacit understanding of the grounds for his or her activities”. (1986, page 38)

What we have seen in this study is a clash between the ‘tacit’ understandings outlined by Giddens, in that the participants’ understanding of what constitutes a good school is based on notions of social justice and compassion; qualitative notions. As Lewis says, *“You go in this classroom; you make the children **laugh**; [emphasised] you have a bit of **fun**; [emphasised] you do something in a **different** [emphasised] way to everybody else, there’s a fair chance they’re going to remember it”*. Whereas the ‘tacit’ understanding of other agencies, such as Ofsted, is based on monitoring and evaluation criteria based on quantitative notions (Hargreaves, 2001). Moreover, Giddens says;

*“...rationalisation of action primarily concerns the ability and the competence to evaluate the relationship between action and reason. In this way, the agent also evaluates his own and others’ competence”*. (ibid, page 38)

But there are two types of evaluations at play here; those of the teachers’ qualitative notions of social justice and democracy and those of the managerialised quantitative notions of performativity whereby the latter are the dominant force based on methodological misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984). As Giddens says:

*“To be able to ‘act otherwise’ means being able to intervene in the world or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs”*. (ibid, page 40)

The participants describe how they are unable to intervene or influence because the managerialisation of their schools is so dominant that to act otherwise would result in competency proceedings, or at least fear of them, as described by Wendy “*And they [they being the teachers] don’t want to appear unenthusiastic in case... [pause] I don’t know, they get **sacked**. [emphasised]*”.

Habermas (1989) adds to this with his notion of the ‘manufactured public sphere’, a notion discussed in the previous section regarding media influence. Habermas recognised the danger in that “the contradiction between instrumental and communicative rationality results in a threat to society”. For me, instrumental rationality is now dominant and the communicative rationality is dominated by quantitative rationality. Habermas assumes willingness for people to freely embrace the better argument (1996), but for me this better argument has been blurred by the dominance of positivistic quantitative hegemony. And so, Habermas’ public spheres are now dominated by acquiescent behaviours driven by monitoring devices, such that the public sphere is now de-democratised, hence the participants have described themselves as voiceless. Furthermore, Habermas (1984) outlines his notion of “ideal speech” (Habermas, 1984, page 177), whereby distorted communication can be excluded, these are:

1. *All parties in discourse have equal rights to speech acts so that claims and counter claims can be aired, raising questions and demanding answers.*

But as we have seen, the participants no longer have these equal rights.

2. *All parties have equal opportunities to present their assertions, recommendations, explanations etc. so they can ‘problematize’ or challenge the current arguments.*

Again, the participants are not given this opportunity and they are not able to begin to ‘problematize’ the situation because they have lost their voice, both organisationally and professionally.

3. *By use of speech acts all parties express their attitudes, emotions and wishes in an honest and open way.*



These expressions are not part of what is currently valued as they are qualitative; they are only able to do this via studies such as this.

4. *Parties have equal opportunities to alter and resist orders, to refuse as well as to acquiesce, to be accountable and to demand accountability of others, such that there is reciprocity of actions between parties.*

Now remember Wendy's words: "*I got sent away with a flea in my ear*"

The participants cannot resist or refuse without risking their jobs and livelihoods, and any notion of accountability is currently only based on a quantitative system which denies access to other forms of accountability.

Therefore, the participants as teachers, and indeed others working in welfare organisations, are held in a hegemonic prison, locked in by a positivistic, quantitative public sphere (Habermas, 1979) that they are unable to contradict, and chained by an inability to 'act otherwise' because of the managerialisation of their organisations (Clarke et al., 2000). Here, their commodification is based on performativity (Forrester, 2000). Moreover, this performativity denies teachers full access to pedagogical methods (Cox, 2013), such as *communicative teaching*, where teaching can be viewed as a "co-constructed process, a process in which both participating organisms play active roles and in which meaning is not transferred but produced" (Freire, 1996, page 312). Such notions are not quantifiable and are therefore deemed not simply of less value, but as inappropriate as all *outcomes* must be measured. Yet still the participants in this study resisted!

In this section, I have outlined how neoliberal notions are used in welfare institutions to create a reductionist state. This is being done via the control of key words (Williams, 1976) and control of the cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), via control of the media (Chomsky, 1999), control of methodological understandings (Hargreaves, 2001), and institutional managerialisation (Clarke et al., 2000).

In the next section, I move away from the macro perspectives of the participants towards a meso level, an organisational level. As such, the next section discusses the participants' descriptions via the perspective of Wenger's community of practice (1989).

## 6.5 Reflections on an organisational concept of learning

In this section, I consider Wenger's concept of community of practice outlined in his book *Communities of Practice; Learning, Meaning and Identity* (1989), through the participants' descriptions, at an organisational level. The participants outline negativity towards the changes they have experienced and oppose institutional systems and structures because of their moral and ethical stance. They highlight how they cope with this imbalance of accountability, which leaves them with a sense of professional vulnerability. For Wenger, communities of practice are important to organisations such as schools, because learning is an issue of sustaining the interconnectedness of communities of practice (Lave, 2009) through which an organisation knows what it knows and thus becomes effective and valuable to the organisation (Wenger, 1989). What Wenger is saying is that learning is not a separate activity but is integral to work. Wenger states that organisations need to engage learners, resource the learning and motivate the learners, so they see themselves involved in actions, discussions and reflections (Wenger, 1989); features not described by the participants. Furthermore, Wenger suggests that in order for learners to engage, the organisation must minimise prescription, which again is described as absent from our current managerialised schools.

To add depth to the participants' descriptions, I have focused on specific aspects of Wenger's theory, his social theory of learning, then on practice, meaning, community, learning and finally identity; all key features of this theory.

### 6.5.1 A social theory of learning

Wenger's concept of a community of practice includes his social theory of learning, which includes theories of social structure, theories of identity, theories of practice and theories of situated experience. For Wenger, the social structure involves organisational norms and rules which emphasise cultural systems, discourses and history. Yet, as I have already recorded during the findings, my participants express alarm at the current organisational norms and rules because of the loss of discourse opportunities (Pearson and Hall, 1993 and Hoyle and Wallace, 2009) and the ignoring of cultural and organisational history. As Theresa says *"There was nobody looking over your shoulder to see what you were doing and [usual pace and tone] it was just a very **positive**, [emphasised] like, I learned **lots** [emphasised] from other people, you know, **people** [emphasised] shared"*. The participants feel their social structure has been damaged by managerialised practices that do not either involve their voice or acknowledge their

histories, either as learners or as practitioners. As Theresa says “*we all got **carted** [emphasised] down to the [place name] kind of place, [place name], and sort of **indoctrinated** [emphasised]*”. The situated experience involves the teacher’s everyday existence and includes how they improvise, coordinate and interact; here, Wenger places an emphasis on the agency of individuals to create interpersonal events. However, what the participants described is a lack of agency generally, but where they do use agency, it is used to either negotiate a different route to that being espoused by the organisation, or they use their agency to oppose general organisational rules, for example, Oscar says “*sometimes will mean that I will place more emphasis on [pace quickens] certain initiative. [He emphasises ‘parts’, louder and quicker than other words] Or certain **parts** [emphasised] of those initiative than on others*”.

The social practice element of Wenger’s theory involves how teachers produce, then reproduce ways of engaging with the organisation, in that it is concerned with shared resources, and how groups organise activities and relationships (Stoll et al., 2012). However, as we have seen the competitive nature of schools’ systems and structures counteract the teachers’ desire to share resources, and because the organisational activities are prescribed, what is described is a loss of engagement. Therefore, social practice has also been corrupted by the managerialised, marketised organisational culture. Finally, Wenger’s notions of identity concern the social formation of people, the cultural interpretation of a teacher’s worth and the creative use of membership rights. However, what has been described as “*being thrown in at the deep end*” (Theresa) now changes to performance via standards (Lewis - “*I’ve looked at the formula of what Ofsted want [pause] and played the game got around it and erm, [pause] I can produce an Ofsted lesson that... [pause] I must have done; I’ve done it five times... [pause]*”). New imposed notions of identity related to performativity markers (Mahony and Hextall, 2000) means that teachers feel they are only as good as their last observation, which has dramatically altered their identities. Again, what the participants have described is a faultline in their identities, in that their worth as trained practitioners with a wealth of valuable experience is not valued. What is valued is the performance data (Evans, 2008), which they view as morally and ethically corrupt, and so less valid. Wendy: “*you’ve already filled that in six times; it went on their reports two weeks ago and it’s gone on the spreadsheet that’s in the shared area, which everybody can look at. Erm, [pause,][usual tone] but those types of **ridiculous** [emphasised] things to do... [pause]*

*jumping through hoops things, really annoy me and that **spoils your day**. [emphasised, with a sad tone]”.*

Whilst Wenger considered the above four concepts as essential to his social theory of learning, he identified another four concepts which are important in so much that they are a “concern” (Wenger, 1998, p. 14) to the theory. However, I still feel it would be valid for me to reflect on these four in the light of what my participants have described. First is the theory of *collectivity*, which concerns the formation of social configurations, which form ways of creating social cohesion over time. Here, my participants have been vehement in their negative descriptions of the current social configurations in that the managerialised hierarchies, based on notions of monitoring not communicating, undermines social cohesion. Theresa says “*I’ve had a lot of **problems** [emphasised] where I haven’t been listened to by management and I haven’t been supported and things haven’t been **resolved** [emphasised]*”. Furthermore, because these changes have replaced former structures of cohesion, there is no longer any sense of sustainability over time, just more change, which further reduces a teacher’s willingness to engage.

Second are the theories of *subjectivity*, which concern the nature of individuality as an experience of agency and try to describe how subjectivity comes out of engagement with the social world. Again, the teachers’ descriptions of their loss of agency reduces their ability to create any subjectivity, further reducing engagement with that change and so reducing their engagement with their learning (Javis, 2004). Hence, this inability for the creation of new forms of subjectivity results in the strong notions of nostalgia for former ways of knowing about and doing things within their schools. As Theresa says “*That has changed over the years. As staff move on and change, we’ve [pause] got back to [pause] sort of more formal meetings, now*”.

For Wenger’s theories of power, he tries to define a perspective along a continuum from power as a form of dominance and oppression to a form of power which is consensual and collective. Whilst I accept that forms of power in our schools will have been described negatively 30 years ago by some teachers, what my participants have described is a shift along that power continuum so that the position they find themselves in now is marked by a move towards the power as dominance notion and further from the power as a collective, consensual notion. This is described as poor communication

and a lack of consensual decision making as well as “*always having someone looking over your shoulder*” (Betty).

This area is linked to the final notion of the theories of meaning, in that the teachers attempt to produce meanings of their own, via social participation and relations of power (MacBeath, 2012). This again is a faultline in my participants’ descriptions, as their theories of meaning are based on social justice as opposed to performativity and the marketised school. As Lewis says “*it’s **shocking** [emphasised] to admit this: it’s not done for the **benefit** [emphasised] of the kids. It’s **done** [emphasised] [pause] in order to **promote** [emphasised] the school; to be **competitive** [emphasised] in the local area*”. It appears my participants’ theories of meaning are incongruent with current educational discourses and explain their notions of their negativity towards change and their sense of vulnerability working within a structure where they don’t agree with the new meanings; something I have described as a clash of doxa.

#### **6.5.2 Social Practice**

Wenger acknowledges that the systems and structures of organisations are “often at odds with the reality of work” (1989), but his theory still emphasises that it is the “collective constructions of a local practice” (1989) that make it possible to meet the demands of the job. Given what they believe to be a limited opportunity for collective construction, could this indicate the reason behind the high rates of teachers leaving the profession in the UK (Smithers and Robinson, 2004)?

Wenger sees social practice as an enabling organisational force, in that it can resolve “institutionally generated conflicts” (Wenger, 1989), but without communicative structures, those conflicts are not resolved and therefore build up a sense of resentment towards the organisation (Jarvis, 2010). This social practice supports a communal memory of how to get things done, but this memory or history is now held in disdain (Wendy: “*Whereas nowadays, it does not happen like that*”) due to the notion of *crises* in driving change. Consequently, the participants feel they can only function with a sense of ‘here and now’. Again, this leads to a disjointed notion of social practice, one where their valuable experience and history is no longer of importance. Wenger suggests that this social practice creates certain perspectives to get the job done, but now those perspectives are prescribed by a performativity agenda and the former perspectives are de-valued and lost. Furthermore, Wenger’s notion of social practice

involves integrating newcomers, but that is something now seen as at odds with my participants, as newcomers are no longer thrown in at the deep end or left to “*cut their teeth*” (Theresa). They are performance managed via certain standards (Dale, 1982), something separate and of lesser value, according to the participants.

Wenger says that workers – in this case, teachers – get the job satisfaction from social practice as it is here that they communally agree on ways to get the job done. However, Wenger says it involves conventions, recognised intuitions and well-tuned sensitivities. But because these are historically created, they are no longer valued in the current educational environment (Forrester, 2000). Furthermore, Wenger suggests that social practices include embodied understandings, underlying assumptions and shared world views, which are all at odds with what teachers describe; they do not endorse the underlying assumption of capitalist market forces or the world view of neoliberalism. For this reason, teachers no longer communally negotiate their common sense notion of a community of practice, but instead make do with an imposed notion, one they oppose and resist (Jarvis, 2010).

### **6.5.3 Meaning**

*“Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life” (Wenger, 1989).*

According to Wenger, meaning is found in a process of negotiation that involves participation and reification, a dual process fundamental to the human experience of meaning. It is within this negotiation that we confirm, extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret and modify meaning. While Oscar describes how he can redirect or even dismiss certain directives, the marketised and managerialised systems and structures of today’s school cannot afford to have their staff negotiate when there is an outside agenda imposing performativity (Mahony and Hextall, 2000).

Furthermore, Wenger says the notion ‘negotiation of meaning’ is a dynamic and historical process, but now those dynamic structures are described as limiting communication and the historical perspective is no longer valued. Thus, what Wenger sees as negotiation, in that meaning can be resisted and is malleable and can be affected by mutual consent, has been replaced by hierarchical managerialised one-way communication (Clarke et al., 2000), stifling any negotiation and leaving just resistance. Negotiation should involve multiple perspectives to create new resolutions (Jarvis, 2004), but currently there is only one perspective; the marketised, managerialised,

performance-driven education, accountable not to internal organisational practices, but to outside notions of success (Broadfoot, 2001). For this reason, the participants express their voicelessness within the organisation and whilst they oppose the managerialised performativity structures of schools, they do not value these as representing ‘education’ and cling to previously valued notions of welfare education and a love of learning. As Betty says “*So I’ve always been very pro-state school since then. **But**, [emphasised] pro- the idea of state schools, not the current political ideology, [very sad tone] which disappoints me.*”

#### 6.5.4 Community

Wenger sees the community as part of a community of practice, as something separate from wider notions of culture or the structure of organisations, in that community of practice defines a special type of community made up of three elements; joint enterprise, a shared repertoire and mutual engagement. All three are worthy of closer inspection.

##### Mutual Engagement

Practice exists because the people, in this case teachers, participate in actions whose meanings are then negotiated. Therefore, communities of practice are not found in the organisational systems and structures or in a historical vacuum, but for a community of practice to exist, it needs people to talk and interact (Printy, 2008). It involves people doing things together, so involves relationships (Stoll et al., 2012). However, as the participants have described managerialised hierarchies focused on monitoring (Clarke et al., 2000), their current communities of practice concern opposition to the organisation rather than a convergence of meaning. For me, this is totally counterproductive because resistance results in further oppression, via increased monitoring, whilst the maintenance of the community mutually engaged in an organisational agenda will negotiate a way forward (Lave, 2009) to meet the performativity agenda by mutual consent rather than resist it. However, notions of over-managerialised, bullying leadership, as described by the participants, would be fearful of such negotiation; fearful of straying from the path of performativity and will not create a motivated workforce. As Betty found “*She was **a horrible** [emphasised] bully and she drummed three people out of the profession and she used to **boast** [emphasised] about it: [spoken as if by a mock head teacher] “I’ve drummed three people out of this profession over the last fifteen years, so don’t start...” ...So I got myself out and went on supply”.* So for me, schools that achieve ‘outstanding’ Ofsted ratings cannot do so simply by managerialised

monitoring; they need a motivated, enthused workforce with a strong professional identity. However, such managerialised monitoring can achieve an Ofsted ‘good’. Hence, this is where school leadership needs to understand the importance of communities of practice in order to harness their power, a power which can achieve a communally negotiated excellence *and* meet the demands of outside accountability measures (Evans, 2008).

All the participants in this study were in schools rated ‘good’ by Ofsted. They have articulated the managerialised nature of their schools and the limited opportunities for communication within the organisation. It is with this in mind that I tentatively suggest that to achieve a ‘good’ Ofsted, it is a simple matter of managerialising a school, of instituting systems and structures of monitoring and evaluation. In my experience, some within the field of education and some head teachers, often those *stuck* in the ‘good’ category, consider that if forms of monitoring and evaluation leads to a ‘good’, then more and more of such systems and structures will lead to ‘outstanding’. Yet this does not appear to be the case, because this leads to more resistance. So I also tentatively suggest that to achieve an ‘outstanding’ grade from Ofsted, a school has to maintain simple monitoring and evaluation systems and structures and also align the school’s values and vision (Coburn, 2001) not to performativity, but to the humanistic, compassionate notions held by their staff; those notions of social justice and democracy as outlined (Fredrickson, 2002). Moreover, this alignment will create not only more coherent forms of organisational structures, but also more powerful ones, as they will be based on collegiality via improved communication and the powerful voice of teachers, as educators, within the organisation.

### Joint Enterprise

Various elements help sustain a community of practice, such as collective negotiation, which reflects “full mental engagement” (Wenger, 1989), something clearly not described in this case. In spite of outside influences such as Ofsted, the enterprise is defined by the negotiated responses of the participants. In this case, the analysis reveals that enterprise cannot be described as reflecting negotiated responses locally or on a wider scale, as neoliberal notions are unsupported. Finally, the joint enterprise “creates relations of mutual accountability that become integral to practice” (Wenger, 1989), something which does not exist, as the only accountability measures are those imposed locally by hierarchical monitoring devices and more widely by outside agencies such as



Ofsted. What is described by the participants is not a joint enterprise, but the oppositional positioning of the participants, which reflects an understanding that historically this *was* an element of their community of practice. It may not have been what they wanted then, but it was far better than what they have now. Furthermore, it is this notion of mutual accountability which forms part of an understanding of what being a professional is all about, in that it is the professional community who should decide what good practice is (MacBeath, 2012), not outside notions of human capital creating pupils fit for a globalised market economy (DfES, 1996).

### Shared Repertoire

Here, the community of practice is defined by its routines, words, tools, stories, genres and concepts. However, it is here that those routines, words and tools are now managerialised; those stories and genres are no longer given credit because they are seen as a former way of doing things, which led to a crisis. Furthermore, the concepts concerning education are incongruent, in that teachers perceive their role as caring for, and instilling a love of education in their pupils, not the current concept of neoliberal education creating competition with the goal of adding human capital to help the economy (DfES, 2003). For me, this highlights differences in school organisational systems, in that if leadership aligns the performativity, managerialised concepts with aspects of social justice, then the shared repertoire can be re-introduced, and whilst the routines, words and tools may differ, the stories, genres and concepts can become congruent.

### 6.5.5 Learning

*“Learning is the engine of practice and practice is the history of that learning”*

(Wenger, 1989, page 96)

Wenger states that learning is totally embedded in practice and therefore it is never a static subject, but by participating in practice and engaging in work, our learning evolves. This necessarily includes mutual engagement, which develops relationships, helps define our identities and teaches how to engage. However, what has been described by the participants is a declining level of engagement opportunities and a formulaic approach to how to engage via notions of the ‘Ofsted perfect lesson’, but as Lewis says *“I’ve listened to [Name of educationalist] talking [pause] about [pause] children having to be progressing every 15 minutes. It does not work like that. [pause]”*

*You know, it does not work like that. It might take three weeks to get some progression out of kids; you cannot do it in 20 minutes, [pause]”*

Learning involves “understanding and tuning their enterprise” (Wenger, 1989), which involves an understanding of their enterprises, knowing about accountability and aligning their engagement. However, the teachers struggle to describe their enterprise other than through human capital theory and whilst they know about accountability, they describe it as unfair. Therefore they struggle to align their engagement with the current educational discourse.

According to Wenger, the negotiation of meaning via our practice is temporal. As such, communities of practice can be seen as the shared histories of learning. Furthermore, because of this history, teachers can have their identities anchored in both that practice and the associated reifications. This makes it very difficult for a teacher to become a radically different person when working in the same community of practice. This notion is certainly confirmed by my participants in that they are resisting outside influences on their community of practice, as they have been working in the same schools for a number of years and so will be steeped in those practices, hence their reluctance to change. But this is inevitable with any change in practice, because learning involves joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. For this reason, it might seem that any change will be met by opposition, so what I have described through my participants’ words is to be expected. However, my point here is that current notions of change through learning do not take into account that *shared repertoire, mutual engagement* or *joint enterprise*. Instead, managerialised notions of learning for accountability purposes exist (Clarke, et al., 2000), whereby teachers are “*carted off*” (Betty) for a new learning experience or “*attempted indoctrination*” (Betty). Learning is about both the development of our practice and our ability to negotiate meaning, but these managerialised practices do not acknowledge the necessity of that joint enterprise because it isn’t *joint*, it is forced on teachers by government-controlled outside agencies (Broadfoot, 2001).

Whilst it is hard for an individual to change while still working within a community of practice, the opposite is also true; that it is not easy to transform without a new community of practice. Perhaps this is why Oscar is being given the opportunity to explore leadership communities of practice out of school, as a process of identity

alteration, in that he can align his practice and reifications towards the leadership goals of managerialised accountability and away from life at the ‘chalk face’.

#### 6.5.6 Identity

*“In practice, we know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiated; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive” (Wenger, 1989)*

Wenger does not associate his notion of identity with concepts of self-images and narratives of self. Instead, it is aligned with our prolonged engagement in an enterprise, with that enterprise aligned to a community of practice. Consequently, identity can be seen as a mixture of the individual’s experiences and competence within the community (Stoll et al., 2012). Yet it is here that the participants describe anomie, in that their experiences are no longer valued because of the changed notion of competence as expressed by Wendy “...all of that is the discovery of the process. [pace slows right down] But in Ofsted terms, that wouldn’t be as good”. However, the participants both value their experiences and describe them in terms of nostalgia for a better era. They reject the changed notion of competence, which is now aligned to performativity, whereas their notions of accountability are aligned to notions of social justice. Furthermore, participants describe a disconnect between the local community of practice and the wider community, in that what is now expected locally is at odds with the needs of that wider community. Wendy describes this disconnect via her understanding of what Ofsted may perceive as a poor lesson “all of that is the discovery of the process. [pace slows right down] But in Ofsted terms, that wouldn’t be as good.”, yet she persists in this way of working because she believes this is what will benefit the pupils and therefore will help the wider community. Likewise, Oscar acknowledges the local performativity agenda, but is critical of how this forms the basis of comparisons across the wider community in that a comparison between his local community and that of a “leafy suburb” is of little value. (“I object to having some leafy lane school [begins jovial tone to show how he considers the situation farcical] held up as a paragon of virtue of how we should be doing things here. You know? And the situation that... the education is... it’s not unfair as long as every factor is taken into account.”)

## Summary

In this section, looking at organisational changes described by the participants, I have outlined the loss of discourse opportunities and associated loss of voice in the organisation by ignoring historical and cultural practices, leading to a sense of ‘only here and now’ being of value. As such, agency is frequently used against organisational goals, not to support them; something exacerbated by the notion of competition between teachers, which reduces sharing practices. Teachers’ identity has been altered due to current value being placed on performativity, not experience and so social cohesion has been weakened by reduced forms of organisational communication, resulting in a reduction in teachers’ willingness to engage.

For this reason, the new ways of thinking are harder to form, resulting in a nostalgic sense that what went before was better. The sense of being over-monitored and being less involved in organisational decision making marks a shift to a more dominant form of power rather than a collaborative one. There is a sense of a faultline separating teachers’ perspectives and new ways of working in schools resulting in professional vulnerability; something further entrenched by managerialised notions of learning which are seen as counterproductive.

The participants’ job satisfaction is undermined by the embodied understandings and underlying assumptions being out of kilter with those of the marketised and managerialised school, leading to opposition and resistance. Furthermore, the hierarchical nature of low trust chains that exist in schools no longer supports opportunities for the ‘negotiation of meaning’, leading to confused notions of competence. This can result in poor leadership, via bullying or over-monitoring, rather than working with the communities of practice to align performativity with social justice, which in turn aligns with teachers’ notions of accountability.

### 6.6 The Suppressed, the Oppressed, the Resisters

In this section, I discuss the nature of the participants’ resistance to both Williams’ (1976) and Gramsci’s (1971) notions, describing their different understandings, such that they have a doxaic clash.

Throughout this work, I have struggled to find words I felt appropriately described the participants who have described how they see things differently than the neoliberal

ideology, despite them not using this terminology. I have generally used terms such as *socially just* or *democratic*. However, these notions are themselves riddled with contradictions and varying standpoints, as well as being corrupted by the way others have abused the words. For example, *socially just* for some is too close to *socialism*, which as we have seen, has become a word to be avoided (Fairclough, 2000). Also, *democracy* to neoliberals is a matter of individual choice and freedom, not an adherence to a collective voice (Robertson, 2001). It is for this reason that I want to briefly explore ways in which we might both think about and describe the resisters, the participants. This is important because these teachers are currently unrecognised, institutionally, organisationally or by their representatives, the collaborative unions. As such, this section is crucial, because in describing them, I also recognise them in a Taylorist way (1994), such that their current non-recognition, as we have seen, is a form of oppression “imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced form of being” (Taylor, 1994).

To begin, I will return to what the neoliberals would consider the worst of times; the post-war period that created the pillars of welfare (Jones, 2014 and Hennessey, 2015). This was the period when government felt its role was to busy itself creating a healthy, well-educated state; an ideal shared with its populous. For Jones (2014), this was “the era of welfare capitalism” with “its ethos of statism and paternalism”. So we can begin building a picture of our resisters as those people who do not deny capitalist principles, but who consider that government’s role should be for the care and therefore welfare of its citizens. It was during this period, as stated by Hennessey (2015), that a notion of meritocracy established itself within education, in that ‘IQ plus effort equals merit’. Hence, doors were opened to establishment roles, doors previously kept closed by notions of class, race, sex etc. According to Hennessey (2015), the UK was able to sustain this welfare capitalism because of the social capital created by the war, whose collective nature had broken down those barriers of misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984).

However, it seems to me that the resisters have noted a decline in this collective social capital, pushed aside by individualism and individual rights. This marks our first distinction in thinking, one that holds as more valuable the role of the state in creating collective good, such that reality for the resisters places caring for the self and others as a moral duty (Raaen, 2011) above self-interest or moral apathy (Foucault, 1983). These notions are described by the participants, such as Wendy’s point about her teaching in

an un-Ofsted way because to do so would “*not to create [emphasised] good employees*” and so she puts herself at risk of competency proceedings for the good of her pupils.

These notions are seen in educational research by authors (and resisters) such as Pring, who states that an essential need in our schools concerns making and sustaining humanity (2015). So we should see beyond the current neoliberal focus on performativity and instead focus on creating an educational community enabled to produce the “citizens of the future” (Strangleman, 2015). This is why I was inclined to use the term ‘social justice’, because as Fraser (1997) points out, there are two possible solutions to unjust ‘affirmation’. *Affirmations* and *transformations* (ibid) are for me, the actions which teachers take to care for their pupils but do not disturb underlying structures. They take on the role of moral educators despite this not being part of their performance criteria and they attempt ‘transformation’ via the things they do to try and balance inequality, such as varied pedagogy, field trips, museum visits, etc. and more importantly, the caring, nurturing and loving roles, building cultural capital and self-esteem in their pupils, which again is not part of the performance criteria.

Furthermore, Little (1995) noted that teachers held a sense of personal responsibility towards their pupils, in that they held a combination of a strong dedication to their work, a vocation, alongside humanism, seen as holism, person-centred, with warm and caring relationships (Woods and Jeffrey, 2004). This is clearly reiterated by the participants; think of Theresa’s words “I love being with the kids”. These are notions the participants describe as being lost in performativity and noted as being lost in current popular culture. For example, see Sulibreaks, a spoken word poet’s ‘Why I hate school but love education’ (2013). Therefore, the resisters acknowledge neoliberal functionalism in the form of human capital (Becker, 1964), but orient themselves towards liberal humanism, such that education concerns the preparation for life as well as for work (Scheeres et al., 2010). It concerns the development of the whole person. Herein lies the messiness of trying to find a definition of resistance thinking in that liberal humanism can be seen as a suburban ideology (Eagleton, 1983), as white, male, middleclass notions of decency, alongside a protestant work ethic; the Ladybird Book Britain. Notions which are hardly the basis for the creation of a socially just education system. Yet the battleground exists as the current managerialisation of schools and its associated performativity (Mahony and Hextall, 2000) of pupils and teachers is seen as being at odds with the participants’ humanistic notions of welfare and guidance via a moral duty to the pupils in their care.

And so we can make our second distinction regarding the resisters, in that they follow principles of humanism, of welfare and the preparation for life after school, not just employment in a globalised economy.

However, I have set out to consider not the formation of teachers' identities, but the nature of the participants' collective selves, something that makes them resist. I find myself turning to Honneth (2007), who outlines three relations which develop individuals' sense of self; love, rights and solidarity. For me the resisters appear to suggest that these are the humanistic notions they consider essential in developing their pupils. They place love, the physical and emotional needs of their pupils, unquantifiable notions, above those of managerialisation. They place rights, the development of moral responsibilities above performativity. They place solidarity, the recognition of individual traits and abilities, that recognition being essential to self-esteem, above competition. Even Lewis, the PE teaching deputy head says "*to be **competitive** [emphasised] in the local area. [Fast pace] Not as far as sports is concerned, but to get bums on seats [pause] and I think [slow pace] that's all wrong.*" As such, because these notions conflict with the neoliberal hegemony, they resist due to notions regarding the caring of their pupils, of protecting them from the degrading dangers of performativity and competition, and so for me they are demonstrating compassion towards their pupils.

It is for these reasons that the resisters seek to develop their pupils' sense of self via notions of compassion within their classrooms, despite the onslaught of managerialisation constantly pulling them away from that role. So why do they still bother? Surely it would be easier to just give up. Honneth's notions were heavily influenced by Hegel (1770-1831), who developed his notion of self-recognition via love, rights and solidarity, whereby love is associated with the family, rights are associated with civil rights and solidarity concerns a sense of state togetherness. As such, to neglect the development of such features in our young people would be to create citizens who lacked self-esteem, who did not accept the rights of others and who did not develop a sense of community towards the state. In other words, to neglect this duty would be to create citizens with no moral compass, no self-worth and without a sense of belonging. Therefore, for me, the participants resist because if they did not, then society would break down. Hence, not only do they resist because of notions of compassion towards the individual pupils, but also because of compassion towards society in

general. [Dare I draw a link here between performativity in our schools, alienating youth and so driving some towards religious fundamentalism?]

In *Upheavals of Thought* (2001), Nussbaum suggests that for her personal community, relationships of compassion should be left out when it comes to compassion within constitutional and legal settings, such that she will “leave aside the specific content compassion may have in connection with the different conceptions of value and ultimate meaning that citizens have” (ibid, page 401). However, I don’t see it like this, because welfare institutions historically meant matching the individual within an institutional community. But now, because of the neoliberalism of welfare, institutions have pushed out the individual and community, and have introduced constitutional and legal notions. Nussbaum (2001) continues in her chapter on Compassion and Public Life: “I shall be examining compassion in connection with a form of political liberalism, a political conception that attempts to win an overlapping consensus among citizens of many different kinds, respecting the space within which they each elaborate and pursue their different reasonable conceptions of good” (ibid, page 401). She asks why should we even begin to look at the concepts of good in the first place, as if the answer is completely obvious and could never change; the answer is that we need to concern ourselves with good because it concerns citizens’ motivations to “not impose strains on human psychology” and that there is a “decent chance of being stable over time” (ibid, page 402). As my analysis has shown, neoliberalism does impose strains on human psychology; they are fighting a war. Furthermore, as neoliberalism concerns a reductionist state, eventually it will run out of the state assets it seeks to reduce and is therefore not stable over time, certainly not for generations.

Whilst Nussbaum (2001) acknowledges that her concept of compassion is “unreliable and partial” (ibid, page 403), she still feels it necessary to link compassion in the political structure because of a) individual psychology and b) the institutional design. Again, I see that the individual psychology of the participants is not aligned to the current political structure, because neoliberal performativity lacks compassion for pupils, and no wonder, when so many are labelled as failures. Secondly, neoliberalised institutions negate compassion via their industrialised, managerialised notions of quantitative methodologies, which eliminate the need for human compassion, resulting in schools that are becoming uncompassionate, industrialised bureaucracies of human capital creation via testing; no longer the welfare institutions of post-war UK.



Therefore, politics has become narcissistic in that politics is about *politics*, as it concerns itself with misrecognitions (Bourdieu, 1984) such as globalisation (Hay, 2002) and crises, and it is no longer concerned with Rawls' (1996) notion, where the goal of political society is to help its citizens search for the good life. So, I believe Utopia is not lost but it is no longer being searched for.

But my participants, the resisters, give me hope. Despite their suppression and oppression, they resist, subvert and educate in ways they see fit and only give lip service to the performativity agenda, (Betty: “*I was **really** [emphasised] happy, but I knew that that was an exhibition lesson*”), such that their notion of education is connected to the ideas of social justice via humanism and compassion and via wanting a voice amidst neoliberal oppression. Moreover, their notions of education include the morality of love, care and human flourishing (an emotional element), which all appear to have been lost in our current system. I have come across this form of education before; it is critical pedagogy. Giroux (2010), building on Freire's work, described critical pedagogy as an educational movement guided by passion and principle, to help pupils develop consciousness of freedom, recognise authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power. Hence, there are definite overlaps with the resisters and critical pedagogy. Although critical pedagogy includes more radical notions such as *unlearning* and *relearning* in order to help the disenfranchised elements of the educational system left out by the traditional structure, I believe that the resisters can be considered moderate critical pedagogists, without even knowing it. Therefore, the resisters are the new social movement, but they don't know it yet, as they have not been mobilised into a coherent force; currently they are a silent critical pedagogical army.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a critical overview of our current educational systems and structures as described by my participants. Consequently, I have been critical of neoliberal notions of managerialisation and marketization, and have shown that these competitive understandings are not efficient or cost saving. Furthermore, they do not produce, from the understandings of the participants, valuable notions of education. I have been critical of the way language and methodologies have been used to create a new way of thinking and have been surprised to find that, despite this hegemonic onslaught, the participants oppose and resist these ways of thinking because they have

compassion and principles guiding their ethical positioning, such that they are an unheard and unseen power, desperately holding up social justice within our schools in order to stem systematic social unrest.

## **Chapter 7 – Conclusion**

### **7.1 Teachers' Lived Experiences within a Neoliberal hegemony**

Methodologically, this study has a qualitative approach using interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the lived experiences of teachers. As such, the nature of the new knowledge concerns the perspectives of teachers within the context of a neoliberal hegemony. For me, this context is fundamental to understanding the teachers' lived experiences because it is the changed forms of organisational experiences (Clarke et al., 2000) that the teachers have described; from changed forms of organisational communication to the changed forms of learning that the teachers experience. It is this change, brought about by managerialisation and marketization, that the teachers describe as resisting, both philosophically and practically. It is this managerialisation of schools which creates an organisation of monitoring and not communicating, and the marketisation, based on competition, which teachers resist.

They resist because they oppose these changes. They describe an imbalance of accountability in that they see through the qualitative monitoring judgements (Evans, 2008), because they know education is more complex than that and because it reduces their own professional autonomy. This, they consider, deprofessionalises them and creates a sense of professional vulnerability. Furthermore, they resist because, to them, the managerialised organisation is a poorer organisation as it reduces collective learning opportunities (Jarvis, 2004) for them as professionals and pedagogically for their pupils, hence their practical resistance.

More specifically, the participants have described change in their lived experiences, such that change is described as a one-way, top-down flow of communication, leaving teachers with a sense of powerlessness, in that their voice is suppressed and so they lack an organisational voice (Forester, 2000), something they describe as being emotionally upsetting. This results in teachers having to have resilience, not only with the rigours of teaching young people, but also to work within organisations that have stunted forms of communication and which have introduced new structures designed for monitoring not communication. These structures not only suppressed organisational dialogue, but were seen as a form of oppression via bureaucratic monitoring.

In response to this situation, the participants describe how they use informal forms of communication and may even deceive others about the existence of a two-way flow of communication. However, it is understood by the participants that the one-way flow creates poor organisational decision making. From the participants' perspectives, it appears that the hierarchical organisational systems and structures exist as monitoring and evaluating tools (Clarke et al., 2000), not as forms of organisational communication. Leadership, within this hierarchical structure, requires a change in identity and can adversely affect people.

The participants outline how important their communities of practice are to them, describing enjoyable, collaborative practices and opposing the managerialised competitive notions. They accept the need for professional learning because of the constant change they experience; however, they reject certain forms of learning because it serves organisational goals, not (Coburn, 2001) personal or professional goals.

Fundamentally, what each participant has done is to position themselves as being opposed to, and disconnected from, the transformation schools have undertaken. They describe these modifications in terms of organisational communication, managerialisation, monitoring and learning, all of which are discordant views, such that for me, they describe a war of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa.

From my understandings and interpretations of the participant's descriptions, I suggest that organisations maintain meeting structures with agendas and minutes (or recommendations), but do not maintain this structure for the purposes of organisational communication; rather, instead as a system for information gathering or to communicate an instruction. Hence, the flow of communication is weakened or even blocked by the participants, and because decision making was confined to the higher tiers of the hierarchy, poorer decisions were made and subsequently withdrawn, with the voices of the participants suppressed.

The participants describe how communities of practice used to exist within this formal organisational structure, as well as the informal collegial structures, but now they only reside within the informal, via a notion of complaining to those higher in the school's hierarchy. This leaves people with a sense of voicelessness and a sense that the organisational power resides firmly at the top of the hierarchy. As such, it is perceived as an undemocratic organisation and erodes community cohesion.

The notion of hierarchical communication is discussed as something which may be necessary today, because of the difficult decisions that head teachers sometimes have to make, and so a distancing of relationships may be necessary. However, this notion, whilst being understood, is rejected because the participants' notions of social justice and democracy are seen as more important to them than organisational management; that is why the current structures of low trust chains are rejected in favour of a flat hierarchical structure based on two-way flows of communication.

The notion of organisational power, brought about by the managerialisation (Clarke et al., 2000) of the role of teachers, is described as homogenising (Brass, 1985) teachers, a notion that reduces learning experiences for the pupils. However, this new managerialism depletes the participants' notions of professional autonomy (MacBeath, 2012), whereby they were once trusted to be consistent and able to instil positive learning behaviours in their pupils without the monitoring – but they are no longer. This managerialised monitoring is contrasted by notions of professional self-regulation (Pearson and Hall, 1993), based on a collective understanding of unstated expectations, which for me, is a form of professional oppression.

Participants express concern regarding their professional development because they describe it not as a result of their desired personal learning outcomes (Jarvis, 2004), but materialising from the need to respond to the constant change imposed on them. So this form of continual professional development is perceived as undifferentiated and regularly irrelevant to the learners, as well as being imposed. For me, the result is a profession disengaged with its own development and left to respond to imposed doctrine, based on short term institutional goals, individually and organisationally, and institutionally.

Finally, in terms of change, learning during networking (Stoll, 2007) is perceived as being the most engaging when those encounters are informal and driven by those involved. They are considered less engaging when formalised. Hence, the consequences of financial pressures that have reduced network coordination may offer some benefits, but only if power to engage is handed over to those wanting that power. Despite this, networked learning is perceived as positive, yet concerns are raised about the fragmentation of our schools, because of government policy which separates schools, such as academies, free schools, teaching schools, etc.

Following their descriptions of change, the participants described opposition towards these changed organisational systems and structures. They described a sense of their work being overly bureaucratic, because of the demands of leadership as well as having experienced poor leadership styles. Furthermore, they describe their experiences as involving overly bureaucratic forms of assessment which are not formative and which compromise pupils' learning. These are all similar points made regarding teacher assessment. This suggests that what is being judged is only being judged because it is easily measured (Biesta, 2009), not because it enhances learning.

Their oppositional positioning towards assessment procedures for pupils is driven by a distaste for leadership placing high value on summative assessment data when pedagogically, the participants align themselves towards formative assessment as being more worthy. Hence, the expectations of constant spreadsheet filling clash with their pedagogical philosophies and are incongruent with subject specific demands, such that they perceive a system of monitoring and evaluation based on what is easily measured, not what is of value.

Opposition is also found in the disdain participants show towards how they are judged, in that they describe a formulaic notion of monitoring and evaluation, so they simply perform to this simplistic formula as and when required, but not as their regular practice. As such, not only are pupils measured by what is easily measured, so are teachers, and as with pupils, this measurement has little value in the eyes of the participants. However, the forms of evaluation still leave the participants with a sense of constraint, in that they do not agree with the forms of evaluation but they nevertheless comply. Furthermore, forms of organisational compliance are described as compliance over and above the rules, leaving some teachers with a sense of working within a panopticon, where someone is always watching and judging their organisational commitment, e.g. Wendy saying "*are you asking me or telling me?*"

It is the managerialisation of our schools that the participants oppose, which creates false notions of the quality of teaching via false notions of what teaching outcomes consist of. Yet the chasing of these false notions, whether it is the constant striving for A\*-C's or accolades for the recruitment of pupils or "*bums on seats*" [Lewis] are falsehoods which teachers see through and so express not only oppositional positioning,

but a general “disappointment”. While they resolve themselves to accepting that *this is how it is*, they do not align themselves to it ethically.

In conclusion, the current life of the participants as teachers is expressed as a place which had a combination of the managerialisation of monitoring and evaluation, which is relatively transparent and uses outwardly visible tools and outcomes with managerialised forms of communication, yet neither is valued by the participants. The participants’ descriptions of their oppositional position is a description of an imbalance of accountability, something which is expressed on a national level because the data used is not contextualised and so for me, emphasises a clash of doxa. The notion of managerialised school accountability is perceived as being so established that it is unquestionable, such that it is now seen as the dominant discourse. However, the participants do question the imbalances in terms of the perceived imbalance of resources allocation and monitoring between curriculum areas. The imbalance of accountability, at a local perspective, concerns how teachers have learnt to deliver exhibition lessons and produce the required bureaucracy when being observed. They understand that this is not part of their daily experience, showing how they teach according to their own moral and ethical stances most of the time, with limited periods of performance. However, the continually changing success criteria for an observed lesson causes anxiety about how to perform and involves an element of luck because of the snapshot nature of this accountability; the anxiety for me demonstrating a battle between doxa.

The participants’ descriptions suggest that there exists a hierarchy of curriculum importance, based on notions of human capital theory, which gives higher status to those curriculum areas that are quantified in international league tables and low status to those curriculum areas, not in the league table measurements. As a result, perceptions of parents and pupils have changed, causing frustration for teachers teaching subjects of low status, but also a perception that schools have lost the holistic approach to education, in that it is no longer about producing pupils with a broad and balanced knowledge of the curriculum.

Furthermore, the change in focus from the performativity of the pupils being their issue, to the performativity of the pupils being the teachers’ issue, has weakened notions of employability, because of the pressures put on teachers to prove their worth via their

pupils' examination performance. It has been suggested by the participants that this in turn results in a lack of resilience and reduced self-motivation amongst pupils.

From a local perspective, the participants describe their confidence in managing the performance process via observation of their lessons by being able to produce all the right documentation and deliver staged lessons. The gap between what is delivered on a day to day basis and the expectations during an observation is acknowledged and is accepted as the reality of being able to cope in a rapidly changing, yet still demanding context. However, there exists a gap between the participants' knowledge of performativity expectations and the rapidly changing nature of those expectations. This is something which leaves them with a sense of professional vulnerability. Furthermore, the snapshot nature of school monitoring and accountability measures is described as unfair, because they require an element of luck for a good judgement to be received and it is regarded that luck should not be an element of a formal professional judgement of accountability.

Following the participants' descriptions of an imbalance of accountability, they then describe a sense of professional vulnerability. This is brought about by new forms of monitoring and evaluation of their performance describing clearly drawn up battle lines between the lifeworlds of teachers and the dominant hegemony. This is illustrated in the form of nostalgia towards a time when teachers were trusted professionals (MacBeath, 2012) and contrasts starkly with the managerialised monitoring and evaluation currently found in schools.

For me, what has been described is a war which uses the performativity agenda with its associated rhetoric of school improvement via standardised targets, managerialised and quantifiable systems, to force compliance to a neoliberal industrialised notion of education. Yet teachers see through much of the neoliberal misrecognition, especially the quantifiable nature of learning, tactically balancing their desire to conform and perform when required, and providing a good education for their pupils when they are not being observed. Nevertheless, the lived experiences describe a resistance to the neoliberal agenda in that there exists a war of the ways of thinking about schools, teaching and education; there is a war of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa.

Finally, the participants describe how they resist change, not just philosophically as outlined above, but also practically. They describe three ways to mediate between what



is sent down from an authority higher than theirs, such that they choose what to resist. They describe how they can ignore some messages from powerful sources, but place an onus on some things. They resist via forms of negotiation which are informal and so are not organisationally recognised. They recognise that this is not a joint enterprise and is seen as a weak form of community voice, as it only appears after a decision has taken place, thereby forcing resistance, rather than embracing collective negotiation prior to decision making. Hence, decision making, as it is currently perceived, is weak and changes are given low status as they do not comply with their notions of inclusive, democratic forms of decision making.

## **7.2 Sociological Perspectives**

From a sociological perspective, the study has found, via the teachers' descriptions, that the language used to drive the changes they oppose hides a broader economic and political stance. It is hidden at a macro level because the managerialisation and marketisation the teachers oppose are the neoliberal building blocks of a reductionist state. The managerialisation and marketisation are essential elements needed for the state to transfer organisations, in this case schools, from state ownership into private ownership. This is done whilst maintaining an illusion of accountability to justify the changes to a wider audience. Yet teachers see through this accountability and find it flawed, hence the philosophical resistance. Furthermore the teachers see through the managerialisation and marketization, because they question the quantitative accountability measures which are used to judge them, their schools and their pupils.

However, the teachers are aware of the crises created in their lived experiences in that they know they are under pressure to compete with other teachers, compete with other schools and compete with other countries. From a sociological perspective, what is interesting is how the pressure put on teachers to compete hides the neoliberal direction of travel towards a position where state-owned schools can be released into private ownership, which will be justified, because of the crisis in education and the underperformance of pupils, teachers, schools and the country.

## **7.3 Theoretical Perspectives**

The nature of the teachers' lived experiences has been described using theoretical notions from Habermas (1979, 1996), Giddens (1986, 1991) and Bourdieu (1984, 1994, 1998). Using the theoretical lenses of Habermas I have described how teachers are

denied access to communicative actions to alter lifeworlds (Habermas, 1979). They are denied access due to the new perspectives on what constitutes valuable education being driven by the managerialisation and marketisation requirements of quantitative accountability criteria. As such, the participants' lived experiences describe bureaucratically closed modes of communication (Habermas, 1996), which caused them to describe a loss of professionalism.

The descriptions of change and their resistance to this change has been described in a Habermasian context as a clash of lifeworlds, where the teachers' descriptions of what they consider to be valuable learning or a communicative organisation is contrary to the judgement criteria used by those in the manufactured public sphere (Habermas, 1996), i.e. the media, the government and Ofsted.

Giddens' notion of structuration (1986) also includes an ability for actors to 'act otherwise' (1986), something the teachers' descriptions included, as they use practical methods of resistance. However, the overwhelming theme of the loss of an organisational voice questions the effectiveness of this resistance. What this study has found is that the stocks of unarticulated knowledge (Giddens, 1986) are no longer organisationally recognised. If these stocks of unarticulated knowledge are ritualised and made tacit, then actors have what Giddens (1991) describes as ontological security. However, as the teachers describe a devaluing of their unarticulated knowledge, I have described the teachers as having ontological insecurity. Giddens (1986) also describes structural properties as being the institutional features of our social systems, where we continually evaluate our actions based on our practical consciousness. He acknowledges that a rupture can occur where the routinised forms of structures are at odds with their practical consciousness. For me, this is what this study has found; the teachers sense a rupture from their organisational structures.

Furthermore, Giddens' theory of structuration (1986) acknowledges change over time. I have added to Giddens' notions by suggesting that the teachers' ontological insecurity is structuration lag, in that they lag behind the cultural hegemony of neoliberalism and cling to previous notions of welfare education. As such, I have suggested that the participants in this study are structuration laggards.

Finally, from a theoretical perspective I have used Bourdieu's (1984) notion of doxa. Bourdieu was interested in inequality within society and he created the notion of doxa

to describe how inequality can exist via misrecognition, in that inequalities can be so ingrained, so taken for granted, that they become invisible. This ‘doxa’, which is a combination of accepted social norms and unorthodox views, is our unstated common sense view of the world. It is an adherence of relations of order which, because they structure in separately both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident.

I have used this notion of doxa to help describe my participants’ world views, in that it is the nature of their oppositional descriptions that they describe how their field of understanding of their duties as teachers is being challenged, such that their taken for granted knowledge of the role of teachers is now challenged. Within a teacher habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), my participants act according to principles which affirm all their thoughts and actions. These principles are not held in place by any apparatus (physical or symbolic), but have been instilled in every member by their early experiences of joining the teaching profession. As such, there is a little of what Bourdieu calls “yesterday’s man” (1984, page 179) in my participants, in that what they describe is articulated via a habitus with a long history, one that they cling to, hence my participants’ resistance and my description of a doxaic clash.

However, given the objective structures which were stable when the participants entered the profession and hence the ease at which they were reproduced within the teachers’ ‘mental structures’, how have those objective structures become disturbed? Given the discussion above, regarding neoliberalism and its associated place along an economic continuum, the strength of the disturbance is associated with the strength of the fundamental underlying structures of neoliberalism. The stability of the habitus concerning neoliberalism is now not one possibility among others, but as a self-evident and natural order that goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned (Bourdieu, 1984). Hence for me, the resistance to the changes described by my participants describe an underlying power struggle between teachers’ habitus based on notions of welfare education and the overarching habitus associated with the neoliberal agenda; the doxaic clash.

The weaponry used in this power struggle is the rhetoric of crisis as discussed above. For me, it is the crisis created by fear; fear that our country will fail to cope in a globalised economy; fear that our schools will fail to create the human capital with

which to fight within the globalised economy; fear that teachers will fail to produce that required human capital; and fear that pupils will not be able to cope within the globalised economy without that human capital, all of which are articulated by the participants.

This notion of crisis is recognised by Bourdieu and conceptualised as a point at which our everyday order is challenged and therefore requires extraordinary discourse (1984). In this case, the extraordinary discourse is that of a marketised and managerialised notion of education. Crisis, according to Bourdieu, constrains and confines (1984) our reality, in that we perceive that we have no choice. However, Bourdieu also talks of arbitrariness in the production of power relations (1984). For example, he discusses the arbitrariness of distinctions between men and women and different races, which for Bourdieu is done by securing misrecognition (1984), in that the arbitrary nature of those relations is unseen. For this reason, I have asked whether these crises are also arbitrary, in that what is the nature of our fear of globalisation? Is it simply the economy or is it a misrecognition built to help push forward a neoliberal agenda?

A final theoretical perspective from Bourdieu involves the much described managerialisation of the teaching profession. Bourdieu's notion of habitus is one in which every member is instilled with the dispositions of that habitus without any form of apparatus of control, but the current managerialised monitoring *is* an apparatus of control. Thus, as Bourdieu states, the rule is only second best to the "collective enterprise of inculcation tending to produce habitus that are capable of generating practices regulated without express regulation or an institutionalised call to order" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 17). It is this notion of 'second best' that my participants acknowledge, fear, resist and attempt to subvert, and the reason for the doxaic clash. Furthermore, it is this notion of 'second best' that I have explored via Foucault's notions of governmentality, such that institutional performance has altered since the time of Foucault to a new form of organisational governance, one which no longer controls bureaucracy at the behest of governments, but organises bureaucracies according to performance measures.

#### **7.4 The Replacement of "Conduct of Conduct" with Performativity**

A final theoretical perspective focuses on Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991). Foucault's thinking can be seen as pre-neoliberal, in that he saw governmentality as the

rationale by which to regulate and shape individuals to such an extent that individuals govern their own conduct. According to Foucault, institutional performance was agreed in a so-called 'government at arm's length' (1991) way, where the spaces of economic and civil activity were delegated to bureaucratised professional authorities, such as the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers, or the Schools Council (abolished in 1985 and 1982 respectively). It was seen by Foucault that these independent bodies instigated programmes, strategies and regimes to maintain standards acceptable to society. In England's case, it was these professional bodies which maintained our welfare capitalism and in the case of education, these bodies maintained teacher and school standards. However, neoliberals' use of managerialisation and marketisation to industrialise the welfare state in preparation for privatisation moves governmentality away from the notion of Foucault's 'conduct of conduct', towards conduct via performativity (Lyotard, 1984).

As such, the new managerialism (Clarke et al., 2000) found in educational institutions can be seen as a weak form of governance; not self-policing but back to a previous notion of state policing via enforcement. The participants describe 'low trust' chains (Clarke et al., 2000) of performance within a formal hierarchy and it is these chains which enforce conduct; chains based upon supposedly quantifiable criteria such as learning.

Furthermore, for me, 'conduct of conduct' can be seen as beneficial to society because it is socially constructed by those involved and so people opt in via discussions and debates, thereby creating a rationality which suits a particular context, creating that collective enterprise (Bourdieu, 1984). However, what the participants describe is performativity based on the fear of capability or the fear of crises (not enough human capital to meet the demands of globalisation). For the participants, this new rationality is based on the fear of something bad happening to them or society, not on a rationality based on making society better.

As such, I have suggested that Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991) is now due for a reappraisal, one which considers the new managerialisation agenda and the small state government, existing only to support market forces.

## 7.5 Practice Understandings

As this research is qualitative and uses social constructionism within its methodology, it is complicated to assert any validity claims. This does not mean the work is not valid; just that to assess its quality is more difficult, hence the complexity of the nature of the new knowledge above. However, further organisational conclusions have been drawn in terms of practice understandings, particularly in section 6.5 -*Reflections on an organisational concept of learning*, the discussion of Wenger's notions of organisational learning.

Here, I outlined the loss of discourse opportunities and associated loss of voice in the organisation by ignoring historical and cultural practices. As such, agency is frequently used against organisational goals not to support them, something exacerbated by the notion of competition between teachers, which reduces sharing practices. Teachers' identities have been altered due to current value being placed on performativity, not experience, and so social cohesion has been weakened by reduced forms of organisational communication, resulting in a reduction in teachers' willingness to engage.

The sense of being over-monitored and being less involved in organisational decision making marks a shift to a more dominant form of power, rather than a collaborative one. There is a sense of a rupture (Giddens, 1986), separating teachers' perspectives and new ways of working in schools, resulting in professional vulnerability; something further entrenched by managerialised notions of learning which are seen as counterproductive.

The participant's job satisfaction is undermined by the embodied understandings and underlying assumptions being out of kilter with those of the marketised and managerialised school, leading to opposition and resistance. Furthermore, the hierarchical nature of low trust chains (Clarke, et al., 2000) that exist in schools no longer supports opportunities for the 'negotiation of meaning' (Wenger, 1989), leading to confused notions of competence. This can result in poor leadership, even bullying.

As such, managerialised schools are organisations with a hierarchy of low trust chains, enabled to provide accountability information to outside agencies in order to meet the demands of those agencies (Ofsted, academy chains, local authorities). However, an organisation that has workers resisting organisational goals, as the participants have described, cannot be a productive organisation. As all the participants in this study work

in schools rated as 'good' by Ofsted, this grading will have been achieved without the full backing of the staff. It therefore appears to be the case that in order to achieve a 'good' rating, all a school has to do is to create organisational systems and structures for monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, to get an 'outstanding' rating, do organisations need to open up the flows of communication to harness organisational learning (Wenger, 1989)? It appears that to do this, it would reduce the resistance described and so create better organisations, and consequently a higher performing organisation. In other words, the one way flow of communication resulting from managerialised schools can get a 'good' grading from Ofsted but the un-managerialising of flows of communication, creating a learning organisation, can get an 'outstanding' grading.

Furthermore, I suggest that to achieve an 'outstanding' grade from Ofsted, a school has to maintain simple monitoring and evaluation systems and structures, and align the school's values and vision (Coburn, 2001) not to performativity, but to the humanistic, compassionate notions held by their staff; notions of social justice and democracy (Fredrichson, 2002). Moreover, this alignment will create not only more coherent forms of organisational structures, but also more powerful ones, as they will be based on collegiality via improved communication, and the powerful voice of teachers, as educators within the organisation.

## **7.6 Wider Practice Implications**

In this section, I will outline how this research for me is a useful study in terms of the impacts on teachers and pupils, as well as the significance on other welfare organisations. The impacts on teachers include those of teacher retention and recruitment, and include notions that will be useful to teacher representatives such as teacher unions as well as school leadership. The impacts on pupils include an understanding of the impacts around notions of social justice and their readiness for the world after school. This research is therefore significant to institutions of Higher Education in terms of what to teach their student teachers, in readiness for the role of teacher, but also more widely throughout the university in terms of the students' understanding of the nature of quantitative and qualitative research. Furthermore, the nature of the neoliberal managerialisation and marketisation discussed in this research has wider implications for all welfare institutions in England, as well as other countries that are on the road to neoliberalism or are considering this route.

One of the main impacts of this study is that it can help teachers understand their own experiences by making sense of a complex situation. With a better understanding of teachers' motivations and their connectivity with the compassionate aspects of their roles, we can help them align their understandings within the neoliberal hegemony. Once teachers understand the basis of their difference with the managerialisation, marketisation and competition, then they can become well informed resisters and so can resist more effectively, both organisationally, in their schools, and institutionally, via making more coherent demands of their unions. If teachers have a better understanding of their role within the neoliberal constructions of human capital, then they can better articulate their opposition to a system which labels so many of their pupils as failures and therefore they can press for a different model of education; one that caters for all their pupils. Finally, with a better understanding of their positions within the industrialised notion of schooling, they can better understand the tensions they sense and know that they are not alone, that these tensions are felt elsewhere within education and other welfare organisations. Furthermore, leadership within these institutions can better understand the disconnect their employees feel towards this neoliberalisation and perhaps help to align the two conflicting demands.

As there is currently an issue of teacher retention and recruitment (Barnby, 2006, Smithers and Robinson, 2004), the understandings outlined in this study can help teachers align themselves to a parallel existence, a duality, working within the performativity agenda, whilst continuing to focus on the essential function of the role; that of being an educator, which includes qualitative constructs. To know that others have ontological insecurity, that they are not alone, can be a beneficial force, which can help teachers to continue to resist and manage the stresses that cause the retention issues. Moreover, the councillors, doctors, occupational health workers etc. of stressed teachers can be more sensitive and responsive when dealing with their issues, once they gain the understandings contained within this study.

In terms of recruitment, this study offers an insight into some essential elements which might be considered as being taught within institutions of higher education, for the health professionals mentioned above, but more importantly for the training of prospective teachers. This is important, because they enter the profession presuming that social justice is a larger element of our educational system than is the case, then become disillusioned once they join the profession. After all, few new recruits join the



profession to increase human capital for a globalised economy (Hay, 2002). Within those institutions of Higher Education, there is an obligation to allow students to engage with notions such as the role of education as a form of social justice and/or human capital creation in order to equip them with an understanding of the misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1984) created by the vocabulary, and importantly, the misrecognition created by the methods. Students should be taught how to engage in the quantitative/qualitative debate. Furthermore, if this study adds to the already growing voice regarding an alternative direction in school evaluation, one aligning with notions of social justice, then new recruits will be easier to enthuse, thereby improving recruitment.

I have suggested that teachers can use the knowledge within this study to help articulate demands from their professional representative, the unions, but the usefulness of this study can also be one of informing the unions' officials. Throughout this study, we have seen how the unions have worked alongside the performativity agenda in an attempt to align with the needs of teachers and their organisations to meet the political demands of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism. Yet for me, the very act of attempting to align to this agenda and not to oppose it, is collaboration. This study will help union leaders to refocus their support for teachers and refocus their campaigns in a coherent and positive way, in that the resistance seeks to build a better form of educational system, one where social justice, compassion and democracy are central aims.

Why must we resist? The overwhelming notions expressed by the participants have concerned their resistance to change not only because of the impacts on their lives, but also because of the impact on the lives of their pupils. The participants' sense of social injustice concerns their pupils being denied the education the teachers want to be able to deliver, but cannot because of the managerialisation and marketisation of their schools. The impacts on their pupils are described as regarding inferior forms of pedagogy, constrained by a standardised, homogeneous form of "*perfect lesson*" (Wendy), ill described and in constant flux, as demanded by outside agencies and school leadership. Moreover, the participants are concerned about their pupils' welfare in terms of them being part of the performativity culture within our schools, such that pupils are being judged, graded, segregated, sifted and stratified from day one. Although this is not a finding of this study, I cannot help but wonder whether the escalating issue of young people's mental health problems (Patel et al., 2007) is not linked in some way with the way our schools constantly measure our pupils and judge them using a currency that has

little or no meaning to those pupils, or indeed their parents. This is summed up by Caroline Hart:

*“As a parent I have experienced school consultation evenings where my child is reduced to a basic set of mathematical operations related to reading, writing and numeracy skill. There is no mention of her social, emotional, spiritual or physical well-being. Progress is relayed in numerical ranked sequences according to national and school averages and my child’s place in relation to these norms. I am expected to be pleased if she is on the high achieving side of these averages but actually I am left with a silent antagonism towards a system that reduces a beautifully vivacious lively child into a set of assessment indicators devoid of any meaningful form of life.”* (Hart, 2013)

Furthermore, the driving force of this neoliberal, neo-conservative agenda is human capital, but those accessing this capital, voiced by the CBI, say the current offer is not good enough. Therefore, our pupils are being subjected to a flawed system of pedagogical confusion, stratification, possibly with associated mental health issues. Yet still the schools are not meeting the needs of business, because what business wants are qualitative outputs not quantitative. Hence the need to develop new forms of research knowledge along the lines of values-based research, as outlined in the previous section.

Although this study has focused solely on teachers and the field of education, the neoliberal notions of a reductionist state, via creating industrialised state assets ready to be sold off, can be seen in all our welfare institutions and organisations. Consequently, there are huge similarities within social work, hospitals, charities etc., as well as the emergency services. These are all institutions and organisations teeming with workers fulfilling the demands of managerialised performativity, based on quantitative notions of outputs, instead of doing the job. Imagine what it would be like if suddenly they stopped measuring those targets and instead measured the qualitative.

Not only can this study help other welfare institutions in the UK to question the rationale behind the performativity agenda driven by managerialisation and marketisation, but other countries may want to consider their alliance to neoliberal understandings. Countries considering this route, or already travelling down this path, may want to take time to reflect and debate this direction of travel. Take Chile for example, which has responded to OECD data, which places them in a poor position compared to other countries, by enacting new educational reforms that will create a

structure of accountability within their schools, via a voucher scheme, which is intended to incentivise schools to improve their output data (Elacqua, 2015). Can Chile afford to lose a generation of its children to a system which will weaken its notions of social justice and democracy?

In summary, the wider implications of this study regard the usefulness of the findings in terms of the impacts on teachers and pupils, and on other welfare organisations. In terms of the implications for teachers, the study informs us regarding their retention and recruitment, informing the teaching unions and informing school leadership. In terms of the implications for pupils, it informs the reader about how we think about education, as a form of social justice via equality of performance, or as preparation for the world after school.

The wider implications for establishments of Higher Education regard how to approach teacher education in that the study investigates how teachers are prepared for performativity and an agenda of human capital. Institutes of Higher Education should also be aware of the balance between contradicting notions of social justice via performativity. For example, white working class boys' underperformance and education as a concept beyond schools. As such, an overarching theme that should be tackled in establishments of Higher Education is the understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

In this section, I have outlined the wider implications of this research in terms of a better understanding of the perspectives of teachers via their recruitment and retention, and the impact our current education systems are having on our pupils. These findings may also be considered useful to Higher Education institutions training teachers, but also more widely in terms of the general education students receive on the nature of quantitative and qualitative research. This research has focused on the managerialisation and marketisation of educational systems, but is also relevant to other welfare institutions and other countries who maybe considering a similar political path.

## 7.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the nature of the new knowledge found, such that teachers describe opposition to neoliberal organisational change, notions they resist philosophically and practically. From a sociological perspective, the participants resist

the imposition of managerialisation and marketization, which are the building blocks of a neoliberal reductionist state.

Using the understandings of social theorists, I have described the participants as experiencing a clash of lifeworlds and a clash of doxa, such that they experience ontological insecurity. Furthermore, within their managerialised organisations, they are unable to 'act otherwise', and this is seen as deprofessionalising. The changed notions of organisational accountability are seen as creating poorer organisations due to poorer communication, poorer learning opportunities and a poorer form of governance.

This study has wider implications for teacher recruitment and retention, teacher training, pedagogical understandings, for parents and for business. Furthermore, the wider implications of this study include other welfare organisations as well as other states moving along the neoliberal continuum.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Researcher Self and Identity

Appendix 2 – Invitation letter, school survey

Appendix 3 – Consent letter, school survey

Appendix 4 – Information sheet, school survey

Appendix 5 – Invitation letter, teacher interview

Appendix 6 – Consent letter, teacher interview

Appendix 7 – Information sheet, teacher interview

Appendix 8 – Invitation letter, head teacher

Appendix 9 – Consent letter, head teacher

Appendix 10 – Information sheet, head teacher

Appendix 11 – Support service information a) North Tyneside. B) National, Teacher Support.

Appendix 12 – Semi-structured interview schedule

Appendix 13 – Messy maps from transcripts

Appendix 14 – Photographs of texts

Appendix 15 – Post script

## **Appendix 1**

### **Researcher Self and Identity**

By using a social constructionist methodology I am putting myself at the centre of the research therefore it is necessary for me to explore my own 'self' and 'identity'. This has been prompted by the words of my supervisor who said during my last supervision meeting that I "can't do research in a vacuum". I was both shocked and delighted by this as the 'bracketing off' of my experience during the collection of data, particularly when interviewing participants was becoming a great concern, so to hear that my past can be considered more positively, almost as a strength was extremely exciting and liberating.

To even think that I would be able to leave my own personal experience at the school gates when collecting data was in hind sight a naive notion, but I have got used to that feeling as I progress along the path of PhD and social research. As Michael Agar (1980) stated I will bring with me to the research "my personal baggage by way of growing up in a particular culture, developing personal idiosyncrasies and going through a professional training that conveys a particular set of lenses". This, I consider, necessitates an exploration of my past and the contexts which have shaped me. As I have been an active force within the research, shaping it and creating it, I need to conduct self-scrutiny and involve an element of self-disclosure in order to enable me to produce trustworthy writing. I cannot ignore the wounds and scars and "hard won understandings" that are part of my baggage (Ely et al., 1997). Furthermore, by acknowledging my past and enhancing my understanding of self I can expose prejudice and potential bias which may emerge in the story telling of my research. With an awareness of these features I can fully justify my findings, indeed with these known to me I have used them to energise my research.

I now know that I must acknowledge my past, to become more self-aware, if I am to become a good researcher, but sharing my story is not easy and at the time of writing I was struggling to know whether or not to share the history or just the conclusions drawn

from the history. I am aware of Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism and so by sharing my writing I am constantly, all be it subconsciously, trying to influence you and I am concerned that by writing my history I am in some way attempting to 'self-enhance'. My dilemma is that I need to write my history to improve my understanding of my private self but in the act of writing I am also creating a document for my public self. Normally, as the self I project affects the way others react to me, I try to control the self that I present, but not this time!

In the writing I am attempting to expose my self-schemas and so I will concentrate on context specific nodes in order to help me identify my schematic dimensions. This writing was a difficult thing for me to produce as I consider myself a high self-monitor (Snyder, 1974), but unless I let this go I could not illuminate or discover a better understanding of *me*.

It took my supervisors some time to help me move away from seeing academic writing as a 'scientific', neutral stance conforming to a double blind randomised, controlled trial approach to a structured story telling. Where research is about creatively writing a combination of my own life experiences and how I have come to see the world and how this impacts on how I see the lives of my participants.

Let us see what my own story reveals about me:

### **Context Chronology**

### **Discussion**

I was born at home in Boston, Lincolnshire on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 1963, my dad (Jewish, gypsy, itinerant farm working ancestry) was a toy shop owner and driving instructor, my mum (sea fairing and farming ancestry) was a secretary before becoming a full-time mum. Both Grandparents had been farmers. We lived in a large house near the centre of town. I have an older brother and younger sister. I worked from the age of eight at the toy shop, advertising the shop in a zebra costume or helping unpack and shelve new stock. We have a very strong work ethic, including equity of chores around the home. I went to church (Methodist) with my mum and Gran regularly, we always had a bible and a Koran in the

I have always acknowledged my white, male, able-bodied, middle class, middle-England up-bringing. I have tried to acknowledge the inherent prejudices which come with such an up-bringing. I have dealt with this in a similar way that Alcoholics Anonymous do, they say 'I am an alcoholic but I do not drink'. Similarly I think 'I am a racist, sexist, homophobe, etc, etc, but I do not practice racism, sexism, homophobia, etc, etc' I would never call myself a racist but I have to acknowledge a racist up-bringing just as many white British people born in the sixties also must do. The same applies to all other forms of prejudice associated with this era.

house. My dad didn't come to church, he said with a smile "A billion Chinamen can't be wrong". My childhood was safe, secure and trouble free.

My teenage years were also safe and secure despite the love of motorbikes and all things fast and mechanical. During the school holidays I worked on the land picking fruit, harvesting vegetables or sorting bulbs. I went to a Catholic school which I enjoyed. The focus was not on academic achievement but on creating children with a balanced view of themselves and the world with a foundation of Catholic values. Despite prayers and Mass being part of the school day the formal religious education was more about ethics, I remember one topic being whether it is right to kill a guard when escaping a prisoner of war camp or should you tie him up. Despite having the cane on several occasions I have only one negative memory of the teachers and that was what I considered an unjust remark made about one of my English essays, I'm still a little cross about it! My life and outlook changed at a careers meeting I attended with my mum, we went expecting to be directed towards a career in a trade but we were both shocked when it was suggested that I attend college to do A-Levels. My school didn't even offer O-Levels. I found the transition to A-Levels and college difficult, but I passed just enough to go Derby to study Geography and Geology, something I longed to do because I had become frustrated by living in a small rural town where I knew everyone and they knew me, I wanted to escape and discover new things, meet new people. Again I found the transition difficult as I didn't see myself as academic. I did enjoy college though for

However, my Gran was a forward thinker; she started a tradition of family wealth flowing through the female line not male as she saw how difficult it was for women to create their own wealth and so I was exposed from an early age to different world views. I also had tremendous freedom and roamed the countryside, alone and with friends, at will. This has created in me a deep love of the natural environment. I was only ever shouted at once by my dad and that was for being very late home after losing track of time in the countryside and coming home very late. He then cried and explained that he had been looking for my red monkey T-shirt floating in the drains (man-made rivers that drain the Fens). I was never late home again.

It is interesting that I have stated that I don't see myself as an academic, something at odds with a person who has chosen to study for a PhD! I am aware of how my parents and siblings view me and that is as an academic person, a teacher with a degree. My brother is an engineer, and my sister an occupational therapist, both now have qualifications from Higher Education institutions. But I am the "thicky" in my immediate family, my wife has two degrees and so many other qualifications I don't have space to write them all and my children are hugely successful at school/university.

My brief foray into the murky underworld of squats, direct action and Anarchism says more about my fundamental belief that people are inherently good. I have experienced life enough to know that many



the freedoms it gave me and the broader life experiences but not the degree work. I also became interested in politics; this was the time of apartheid and the miners' strike. I became part of a group who practiced direct action but soon realised that this was not for me, whilst I wholeheartedly embraced Anarchism I couldn't bring myself to break the rules, something which for me is a cornerstone of Anarchism in the first place, no laws because we shouldn't need them.

I left the world of unemployed anarchists and headed back to Boston where I knew I could always find work, I never thought to ask my parents if they minded me coming home! At this point my future wife was at university in Edinburgh and about to go on elective in Kenya and then Peru. I managed to get enough money peeling onions (my mum made me undress in the garage and run across the drive because I stank) and doing bar work to catch up with her in Peru. I disapproval of direct action was consolidated when the train in front of us to Macho Picchu was blown up by the Shining Path communist group killing 12 US citizens. However, the injustices I saw in Peru had a deep impact on me, I saw water cannons and tanks in the streets to keep the rich at ease and I saw indescribable poverty. I also got dysentery, not nice.

My future wife Helen headed back to Edinburgh and I continued working on the land, doing bar work at night and volunteering at various youth clubs. At the youth clubs it became clear to me that I was less interested in the children like me,

people act in many ways that are not good and I know people consider me naive in this respect but I don't see it that way. I have had a privileged life and I act at all times with a strong and powerful moral compass, if everyone had what I have had then I believe they would be good too. Wow this sounds so pompous!

Whilst I was aware of injustices in the world through my political interests such as apartheid and the miners' strike, my trip to Peru cemented a desire to do something useful with my life, something to help those who hadn't been gifted the lucky life I had been handed. I decided to become a teacher.

I still have no interest in working in a middle class school, although I wonder if this says more about my lack of academic confidence and being able to teach able children than it does about my desire to offer something to the less advantaged.

the ones with 'good' families, a bit of money etc. I connected better with the angry anti-social kids and found that because I wasn't disturbed by their behaviour that they responded to me too. This was the beginning of my interest in working in schools with challenging pupils. Although in my early teaching career both at placements in Liverpool and in my first job in Dudley I struggled with discipline/control/classroom management of some pupils. This was largely overcome by the deputy head of the school mentoring me.

After marrying we decided to live and work abroad. We went to Papua New Guinea and lived on a very remote island but we were thrown out of the country because of a mix up with my wife's documentation, there had been a change of government and there was a lot of anti-white feeling. This was a difficult time, the climate was very hostile and the working conditions harsh, but the school was great and the teachers dedicated (apart from pay Fridays when most would get drunk for three or four days).

I found PNG an odd country, it clearly needed staff but I was paid a good wage, we actually left the country with some money, and it seemed like a wealthy country in many respects. I didn't find the poverty I had seen in Peru and was surprised by this. I felt my teaching had little to offer.

Our next posting was to Malawi. Here I felt at home. The children were desperate

I use the term 'we' as it was a joint decision to live and work abroad, although I believe my wife's motives were purely altruistic but I was interested in

to learn and progress because they saw the benefits of a good education and especially a good knowledge of English. I found it odd teaching Macbeth with all the cultural aspects the play encompasses but found that human nature is generally universal.

experiencing different cultures, climates and natural environments as well as contributing to the education of others.

We were both tempted by work in the aid industry, but found some aspects at odds with our ethics. I had done some consultancy work with W.H.O. and went to their head office in the capital to discuss further work. I met two men with designer shirts and flashy watches; they seemed to have been working in the industry for so long that they had become immune to the poverty a few metres away. We had also met many people who held British nationality but had never lived in the UK and seemed lost, having never put down any roots. We decided we wanted to give our children some roots.

We arrived back from nearly three years abroad, neither had a job and my wife was pregnant. We both soon found work and our careers in the UK began to take shape. I started as a teacher of humanities but after three years I got a job managing a unit within a mainstream school for disaffected pupils, the ones in danger of being lost to the system. This was funded for three years. I found this very rewarding but also intense as I had to develop a strong bond with the pupils. The role also caused conflict with other teachers as pupils needed to be re-integrated. This was the part of the job that I began to enjoy the most and I was soon asked to deliver training sessions on

differentiation and classroom management. Although my next role was as head of geography I was appointed on the back of my interest in teaching and learning. It was from this that I was appointed onto the leadership team, first as an experience year, then as a senior teacher and finally as an assistant head. For the first few years I thoroughly enjoyed my roles, eventually I was in charge of continuous professional development, performance management and many other interesting roles. I completed my NPQH which I enjoyed and found useful. I loved this period which culminated in my organising and hosting a training day, with guest speaker Ruth Sutton, at the Stadium of Light for over 200 colleagues, the staff from 6 schools and the LA, focusing on assessment for learning.

However, during this period I had a single terrible year when a very close friend committed suicide, my mum died suddenly at the relatively young age of 64, we lost the last grandparent, the cat was run over and my son didn't get into the same school as his friends. Life was dealing us one blow after another and it took us a long time to come to terms with all the changes. Also during this period my head teacher, someone I admired greatly, became increasingly more ill, and for the last two years of his headship he was very rarely at school. Despite this I was still enjoying work and relishing the new challenges that not having ahead brought.

Prior to this *annus horribilis* other events

occurred which altered my world view. Firstly, whilst back in Malawi, I came across a traffic accident. It was in the pitch black of the countryside. I was in a van with my wife and children. There was a lot of blood and wailing, it was clear that nothing could be done for those already dead and the survivors I saw were in shock, they would not leave their dead partners. I was very conscious of protecting my family but only two people wanted a lift into the city, soon a fleet of ambulances arrived. The papers said 23 died although I did not see this number.

Secondly, whilst teaching on a TEFL course I met a Bosnian, Fiorjd, who said I was “brave” to go to Africa, I challenged this and he told me that I had obviously never been scared; he went onto outline how he had been woken every day for months with a gun at his head, being told that today was “his day”. He then had to wait to hear the click of an empty pistol or oblivion.

Thirdly, my wife had cancer. This came with the associated surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, dread, uncertainty and fear. This was several years ago now and all is currently well.

Eventually after my previous heads long absence we got a new head arrived it was amazing how quickly people turned against him. The office staff, the engine room of many schools, began to express great concerns about his communication skills. As far as I was concerned he had joined a good school and the senior

I can now see that it is because I have many self-schemas that I was able to cope with such a traumatic period, my closeness to my brother, sister and dad after my mother died and after the suicide of my friend my closeness to his wife and children all contributed to coping and moving on. Add to that a hugely supportive wife and two healthy and intelligent

leadership had run the school well without a head for two years so he could only help make this better. However the way he spoke to staff often made me cringe and his poor use of personal pronouns was divisive, he differentiated himself from the staff, from the leadership team, there was definitely no 'us' or team. He upset members of the leadership team so much that two decided to retire early. He appointed a former colleague to be his deputy, but this person had very little school or teaching experience. children I have had a robust network of support.

The new head wanted a three school structure and I was given the role of transition and head of lower school. Because of increasing concerns over poor discipline all staff development was stopped, twilights and training days were spent looking at the three school structure. Even my mentoring of others via leadership pathways and leading from the middle was stopped. It is interesting to consider Bruner's balancing act between commitment and autonomy as I was certainly becoming bored with school, because my roles were reduced and my personal learning had stopped.

It took just three years of the new heads arrival for the school to go from 'Good' for leadership and management (and other areas) to 'Inadequate' across all areas. The local authority had tried to intervene but had no impact and pupil numbers plummeted. I really struggled during this period as it felt like one person had destroyed a school I loved. When the new head started at the school we had an intake of nearly 1000 pupils, when I left it

was under 500. Eventually the head was removed but the school budget was too low to sustain its staffing structure and redundancies had to be made. I was made redundant in Dec 2011.

This event in particular made me realise how I had been living as if protected by an indestructible cloak of white, male, Britishness. This protection blinded me to the dangers others faced and made me feel that I had been arrogant to live like I had.

This ultimately strengthened an already strong relationship; we have been married near 26 years.

I have spent many hours thinking about this period, wondering whether I was part of the problem or what I could have done to have avoided the implosion a great school. I certainly learnt to hate the heads leadership style. I particularly disliked his promotion through patronage and his dismissal of staff development. He damaged collective identities and did not appreciate the importance of a collective self when leading a large institution. What I hated the most was the negative impact he was having on pupil standards and staff wellbeing. So much so that after one particularly fraught union meeting I decided I would put my head above the parapet. I discussed a strategy with my wife and decided I should hold a meeting with the senior staff within the local

authority and outline exactly what the issues were. I did this in a clear way giving evidence to support my points. Part of me still believes that this made me appear disloyal and so contributed to why I was selected for redundancy. Although I have obviously considered that my performance could have been inadequate, but previous heads and deputies say they would say that was not the case.

Having written this mini autobiography I may have to re-think things. As my story builds it appears that I was due to have a mid-life crisis, a sudden realisation of my own fallibility and mortality, how work stress can lead to family breakdown and suicide, all must have had an impact on my outlook on life. Now I must consider whether in my mid-life crisis I chose redundancy over a Porsche!

My redundancy was miss-managed and I did win an appeal, although I think my pig-headedness nearly caused a total mental breakdown as I found the combination of redundancy and fighting an appeal at an employment tribunal very stressful. So why did I bother? They were wrong to act in the way they did, they did not treat me with respect and that really got my back up.

It was my work on my masters that really helped me to focus on leadership and what it was that existed in all previous heads that had been successful but what was lacking in my last head. This process also helped with healing me after the trauma of redundancy. Again it is possibly my many self-schemas that enabled me to cope with



this situation; 'I may not have a job but I am a good dad'.

Some tentative conclusions:

My politics appear to have changed dramatically from the old anarchic days, but I would say not so much, I do own a house and this seems at odds with the anarchist mantra of 'property is theft', but my anarchism was never the black leather jacket, aggressive, machismo of some but the gentle Victorian anarchy of a utopia without rules and laws because none were needed. This appears to stem from the equality instilled in me from an early age, along with an appreciation that there are alternative views of the world which are valid. However, this combination of a powerful ethic of equality combined with a mixed bag of religious teaching has left me with an over moralistic outlook that can be self-destructive. Did I judge my participants harshly via my moralistic lens? I am now aware that I could. Did I judge leadership decisions through this over moralistic lens? Again, I am now aware of the possibility.

I have been and continue to be aware of the fortuitous life I have had both at the start and during the journey and this has been a continued driver for me as I want the opportunities that I had for everyone else. Not the cultural or religious baggage but the safe, secure and positive up-bringing I enjoyed. However, I do have to try to reconcile the love of my schooling and its lack of academic rigour with the current state of schools today. And within that lack of rigour my continued low self confidence in all things academic.

I have come to realise how important life-long learning is to me, both personally and what is offered within the field of education. I loved planning and delivering teacher training sessions yet I find it unworthy of such a profession to allow training to be just at the behest of leaders within a single school. How do teachers drive their own personal development portfolio within data driven cultures?

I can see now how leadership is a construct, and how my lack of support for a head I didn't perceive as a good communicator, amongst other things could have contributed to that head's failure. However, I have no remorse for this as he was not a moral leader. The outcome is that I have invaluable experience working with a number of excellent leaders, heads, deputies, mentors and many others, but unlike many, I have a unique perspective as I have experienced what it is like to work with a poor leader and it is those insights which may enable fresh perspectives to be shown.

I realise now that I have a lot of baggage and so was careful not to falsely interpret or miss represent my participant's words. I listened, not just for the words I heard but also

to the interpretation I placed on those words, an interpretation blurred by the ‘eyeglass’ of my own baggage. However, I can see now that though my interpretations may be blurred they are valid and worthy. As a researcher I have been faithful to the participant’s experience and not crop it into frames narrowed by my life experience but add my frame to theirs thereby creating a new larger frame within which a new picture will illuminate a new perspective. This is yet another big change in my thinking, now I understand that I am as much part of the research as the participants and I like that feeling.

## Appendix 2

### Invitation letter – School Survey



Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus East

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 07980471325

Date:

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Oliver Harness and I am a PhD researcher from Northumbria University. I am carrying out research on teacher learning and am writing to invite you to participate in the research. In order to help you to make a decision as to whether you would like to participate I have included full details of the research with this letter, including why the research is being carried out, what you would be asked to do if you were to become involved and how the research will be used. I am approaching you about this research as you have experience of the research topic area.

I have provided information about the research which is enclosed with this letter. If you would like to get in touch to talk about the research my contact details are provided above and at the end of the enclosed information sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Harness


### Appendix 3

#### Consent Form: School Survey

Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?



Researcher: Oliver Harness, Room H005, School of Health, Community and Education Studies, Coach Lane Campus East, Northumbria University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE7 7XA Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

	YES	NO
<p>Please </p>		
1. I have read the information sheet and understand the purpose of the study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have been given the chance to ask questions about the study and these have been answered to my satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am aware that my personal information will be kept confidential and will not appear in any printed documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports and other research outputs but that they will be anonymised so that I am not identifiable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I have been given the contact details of the researcher who I can contact if I have any further queries about the research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I would like to request a summary of the research to be sent to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree to the University of Northumbria recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purposes set out in the information sheet supplied to me and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. By signing this statement I agree to take part in the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name: Oliver Harness

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Appendix 4

### Information Sheet: School Survey



**Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?**

#### What is the research about?

Many schools are joining together with other schools to explore new ways teachers can learn, I want to explore these ways and how they are.

#### Why is the research being done?

This is an important area and this research will help to build on the knowledge and knowledge which will hopefully lead to a better learning area.

If you have requested a summary of the research, please fill in the following details so that the summary can be sent to you.

I would like the summary to be sent to me by:

Post ☐ Email ☐

#### Why are you asking me to take part?

I am interested in reading about your experiences. If you do not have experience in this area or you do not wish to take part then you may ignore this information sheet. If you do want to contribute then please sign the sheet provided and complete the survey.

#### If I choose to take part what will I have to do and how will my information be used?

Simply answer the questions on the survey in as much detail as possible, then place the completed survey in the envelope provided and place it in the box in the staffroom.

All of your personal details will be kept confidential. The things that you put may be written up as part of my thesis, presented at conferences, or published in research articles. However, anything that is used in this way will be anonymous and you will not be identifiable from this information.

All of the information that is collected will be stored in a restricted access room in a locked cupboard and only I and my supervisors will have access to it. Any electronic files will be kept in a password protected folder that only I have access to. Your personal details will be destroyed once the research is over. Any surveys used in the thesis or other published work will be retained by the university in a secure storage facility and will be destroyed twelve months after completion of the study. You have the right to access any information held about you and you may request this information at any time.

### **Will I get any feedback from the research?**

If you would like to request a summary of the research you can tell me by ticking the appropriate box on the consent form.

### **Other important information**

- The research has approval from the University Research Ethics Committee
- The research is being supervised through Northumbria University
- If at any point you are not happy with anything related to the research then you can discuss this with me or you can go directly to my supervisors. Their contact details have been provided below.
- Taking part in the research will not cost you anything and you will not be asked to provide any bank, or other financial details.

### **I would like to take part – what should I do now?**

If you would like to take part in the research then all you have to do is sign and complete the survey provided. There is a box in the staffroom with the surveys and envelopes. If you wish to discuss the research with me before you do this then you can contact me on the details given below. I would be very grateful if you could do this within two weeks of the date on this letter.

### **Further Information**

Please feel free to get in touch and discuss the research with me at any point. My contact details are provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

**Contact Details:**

Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus East

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 07980471325

Mr Jim Clark (Principal Supervisor)

Head of School

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus West

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 0191 2156420

Linda Barlow-Meade (2nd Supervisor)

Senior Lecturer in Education

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

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NE7 7XA

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## Appendix 5

Invitation letter – Teacher Interviews

Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus East

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk

Tel: 07980471325



Date:

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Oliver Harness and I am a PhD researcher from Northumbria University. I am carrying out research on teacher learning and am writing to invite you to participate in the research. In order to help you to make a decision as to whether you would like to participate I have included full details of the research with this letter, including why the research is being carried out, what you would be asked to do if you were to become involved and how the research will be used. I am approaching you about this research as you have experience of the research topic area.

I have provided information about the research which is enclosed with this letter. If you would like to get in touch to talk about the research my contact details are provided above and at the end of the enclosed information sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Harness


## Appendix 6

### Consent Form: Teacher Interview

Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?



Researcher: Oliver Harness, Room H005, School of Health, Community and Education Studies, Coach Lane Campus East, Northumbria University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE7 7XA Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

	YES	NO
<p>Please </p>		
1. I have read the information sheet and understand the purpose of the study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have been given the chance to ask questions about the study and these have been answered to my satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am aware that my personal information will be kept confidential and will not appear in any printed documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree for the interview to be audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports and other research outputs but that they will be anonymised so that I am not identifiable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I have been given the contact details of the researcher who I can contact if I have any further queries about the research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



9. I would like to request a summary of the research to be sent to me

☐☐

I agree to the University of Northumbria recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purposes set out in the information sheet supplied to me and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. By signing this statement I agree to take part in the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name: Oliver Harness

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 7

### Information Sheet: Teacher Interviews



Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?

#### What is this research about and why have I been asked to take part?

What is the research about?

Many schools are joining together with other schools to create a network. This alters the way teachers can learn, I want to explore this change in practice and see what the effects are. I want to talk to teachers to gather their thoughts and experiences of their learning within a network of schools.

Why is the research being done?

This is an important area and this research and knowledge which will hopefully lead to a new area.

Why are you asking me to take part?

I am interested in talking to you if you have experience of your own learning either in school or as part of a learning network. If you do not wish to take part then you may ignore this information sheet. If you want to talk to me about your involvement, my contact details are given below.

#### If I choose to take part what will I have to do and how will my information be used?

I understand that your learning is a personal topic to discuss with other people and I would like to reassure you that the research will be conducted in a manner that is sensitive and that you will not have to discuss any issues you find difficult.

If you have requested a summary of the research, please fill in the following details so that the summary can be sent to you.

I would like the summary to be sent to me by:

Post ☐

Email ☐

It is also important that you understand that your involvement in the research is voluntary and that if you decide to take part you can change your mind at any time without having to give a reason.

If you choose to take part in the research you will be invited to take part in an interview. The interview will involve talking to me about your thoughts and experiences of being involved in learning as a teacher. The interview will focus on your experiences throughout your career.

- The interview will last for approximately one hour
- If you want to, you can bring someone with you to the interview
- There will be opportunities to take a break whenever you want to during the interview
- You can choose where the interview takes place – it can be at your school, at a public place, such as a cafe, or on the university campus
- If you agree, I would like to audio record the interview
- Following the interview the audio recording will be transcribed and made anonymous and once this has been done the original recording will be deleted.
- Everything that you say is confidential unless you tell me something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm. I would discuss this with you before telling anyone else.

### **How will my information be used and will it be kept private and confidential?**

All of your personal details will be kept confidential. The things that you say during the interview may be written up as part of my thesis, presented at conferences, or published in research articles. However, anything that is used in this way will be anonymous and you will not be identifiable from this information.

All of the information that is collected will be stored in a restricted access room in a locked cupboard and only I and my supervisors will have access to it. Any electronic files will be kept in a password protected folder that only I have access to. Your personal details will be destroyed once the research is over. Any written or recorded information (such as the transcript from the interview) used in the thesis or other published work will be retained by the university in a secure storage facility and will be destroyed twelve months after completion of the study. You have the right to access any information held about you and you may request this information at any time.

### **Will I get any feedback from the research?**

If you would like to request a summary of the research you can tell me by ticking the appropriate box on the consent form.

### Other important information

- The research has approval from the University Research Ethics Committee
- The research is being supervised through Northumbria University
- If at any point you are not happy with anything related to the research then you can discuss this with me or you can go directly to my supervisors. Their contact details have been provided below.
- Taking part in the research will not cost you anything and you will not be asked to provide any bank, or other financial details.

### **I would like to take part – what should I do now?**

If you would like to take part in the research then all you have to do is sign and return the reply slip below in the stamped, addressed envelope provided. If you wish to discuss the research with me before you do this then you can contact me on the details given below. I would be very grateful if you could do this within two weeks of the date on this letter.

Once I receive your reply I will contact you to arrange a time and place for the interview that is convenient for you. You can change your mind about taking part in the research at any time. If you do not want to take part then you do not need to do anything.

### **Further Information**

Please feel free to get in touch and discuss the research with me at any point. My contact details are provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

#### Contact Details

Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus East

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 07980471325

Jim Clark - Senior Supervisor

Head of School

School of Health, Community and

Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus West

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 0191 2156 420

Appendix 8

Invitation letter – Headteacher

Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

School of Health, Community and Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus East

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 07980471325

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Oliver Harness and I am a PhD researcher from Northumbria University. I am carrying out research on teacher learning and am writing to invite you to participate in the research. In order to help you to make a decision as to whether your school would like to participate I have included full details of the research with this letter, including



why the research is being carried out, what the participants would be asked to do if they were to become involved and how the research will be used. I am approaching you about this research as your staff have experience of the research topic area.

I have provided information about the research which is enclosed with this letter. If you would like to get in touch to talk about the research my contact details are provided above and at the end of the enclosed information sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Harness

## Appendix 9


### Consent Form: Head Teacher

Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?



Researcher: Oliver Harness, Room H005, School of Health, Community and Education Studies, Coach Lane Campus East, Northumbria University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE7 7XA

Email: [oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.harness@northumbria.ac.uk)

		YES	NO
Please 			
1.	I have read the information sheet and understand the purpose of the study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the chance to ask questions about the study and these have been answered to my satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I understand that participation in the research is voluntary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand that the participants can withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I am aware that any personal information will be kept confidential and will not appear in any printed documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I understand that the participants words may be quoted in publications, reports and other research outputs but that they will be anonymised so that they are not identifiable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I agree that school documents related to the research area can be gathered and that these will be anonymised.		
8.	I have been given the contact details of the researcher who I can contact if I have any further queries about the research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I would like to request a summary of the research to be sent to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree to the University of Northumbria recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purposes set out in the information sheet supplied to me and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. By signing this statement I agree to take part in the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name: Oliver Harness

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 10

### Information Sheet: Headteacher

Study title: An exploration of a community of learning: How does this community impact on the lived experience of teachers as learners?



### What is this research about and why have I been asked to take part?

What is the research about?

Many schools are joining together with other schools to create a network. This alters the way teachers can learn, I want to explore this. I want to talk to teachers to gather their experiences within a network of schools.

Why is the research being done?

This is an important area and this research will help to build knowledge and understanding in this area.

Why are you asking me to take part?

I am interested in talking to your staff about their part of a learning network. To support the documentation about networking activities, I also like to ask your staff to complete a questionnaire. Your staff would be happy to be interviewed and I would like to talk to me about your involvement, my role in the network.

If you have requested a summary of the research, please fill in the following details so that the summary can be sent to you.

I would like the summary to be sent to me by:

Post ☐ Email ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

to

**If I choose to take part what will I have to do and how will my information be used?**

I understand that the learning of your staff is a personal topic to discuss with other people and I would like to reassure you that the research will be conducted in a manner that is sensitive and that your staff will not have to discuss any issues they find difficult.

It is also important that you understand that your schools involvement in the research is voluntary and that if you decide to take part you can change your mind at any time without having to give a reason.

### **How will my information be used and will it be kept private and confidential?**

All of your school and staff personal details will be kept confidential. The things that are said during the interview may be written up as part of my thesis or presented at conferences, or published in research articles. However, anything that is used in this way will be anonymous and you and your staff will not be identifiable from this information.

All of the information that is collected will be stored in a restricted access room in a locked cupboard and only I and my supervisors will have access to it. Any electronic files will be kept in a password protected folder that only I have access to. Your school and staff details will be destroyed once the research is over. Any written or recorded information (such as the transcript from the interview) used in the thesis or other published work will be retained by the university in a secure storage facility and will be destroyed twelve months after completion of the study. You have the right to access any information held about you and you may request this information at any time.

### **Will I get any feedback from the research?**

If you would like to request a summary of the research you can tell me by ticking the appropriate box on the consent form.

Other important information

- The research has approval from the University Research Ethics Committee
- The research is being supervised through Northumbria University
- If at any point you are not happy with anything related to the research then you can discuss this with me or you can go directly to my supervisors. Their contact details have been provided below.
- Taking part in the research will not cost you anything and you will not be asked to provide any bank, or other financial details.

### **I would like to take part – what should I do now?**

If you would like your school to take part in the research then all you have to do is sign and return the reply slip below in the stamped, addressed envelope provided. If you wish to discuss the research with me before you do this then you can contact me on the

details given below. I would be very grateful if you could do this within two weeks of the date on this letter.

### **Further Information**

Please feel free to get in touch and discuss the research with me at any point. My contact details are provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

#### **Contact Details**

Oliver Harness (Researcher)

Room H005

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NE7 7XA

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Tel: 07980471325

Jim Clark - Senior Supervisor

Head of School

School of Health, Community and

Education Studies

Coach Lane Campus West

Northumbria University

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NE7 7XA

Email: [jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jim.clark@northumbria.ac.uk)

Tel: 0191 2156420



## Appendix 11a

### Counselling Service details



#### Description:

A counselling service for individuals, young people, employees, couples and small groups.

Meditation sessions are also available.

By appointment only - Accreditations - BACP Member

Service start: 28-Mar-2012

Service end: Ongoing

#### Provider:

A B Counselling

#### Address and contact details

Alison Brown, 2 Eskdale Terrace, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear.  
NE30 4PX

Telephone: 07742174237

Mobile: 07742174237

Email: [abcounselling@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:abcounselling@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.abcounselling.com](http://www.abcounselling.com)

Crb checked: Yes

Catchment area: Regional

Gender restrictions: None

Eligibility criteria: Not specified

Referral process: Professional, Self-referral

Please contact me by phone, email or text message.

Appendix 11b



Support Line - open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

We provide a free telephone Support Line for all teachers in England, Wales and Scotland. The Support Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

**UK 08000 562 561**

**Wales Ph: 08000 855 088**

**Txt: 07909341229 - we'll call you back straight away**

What happens when I call?

When you phone our Support Line you will speak to a member of our support team. They will ask you some basic questions about why you are calling and 'triage' your call, or decide the best person for you to speak to, based on this assessment.

They will then do one of the following:

- deal with your call personally as a support call straight away
  - transfer you to one of our BACP accredited counsellors for coaching and counselling
  - transfer you to one of our other services (for example financial counselling or grants)
  - assist with referral for long term treatment e.g. refer you to your GP
- 

How much does it cost to call?

Calls are normally free from a landline.

Who will I be talking to?

You will first speak to a member of our support team. They will ask you some questions to understand your situation and may help you set short term goals, so that you can find a way forward.

If you have counselling or coaching you will be speaking with one of our British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) accredited counsellors. For financial advice you will be talking to a Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) trained debt specialist.

If you call between the hours of 8pm and 8am you will receive support from outside the UK.

What services do you offer over the phone?

We offer an extensive range of information, support and coaching or counselling services:

- [Coaching and Counselling](#) - Our certified coaches aim to help you identify practical goals and actions for yourself, it may be appropriate for you to have up to six telephone counselling sessions.
  - [Money Management or Grants](#) - We can help you take control of your financial problems with debt counselling from our money management team, additionally some teachers may be eligible to receive financial assistance. We offer emergency grants. Terms and conditions apply.
  - [Information and Signposting](#) - Our coaches have a thorough understanding of the education system and the details of life in the classroom. If we don't have the answer to your problem, we will point you in the direction of other organisations that may be able to help.
- 

Are there online options?

Yes, you can access our services by [Email](#) or use our [live Chat service](#).

Is it completely confidential?

Yes. We will only break confidentiality if:

- there is a risk to your own health and safety, or to that of others
  - or if you have been involved in a crime
- 

Can I talk to someone in Welsh or any other languages?

Yes. If you call the Welsh Support Line (08000 855 088), you can speak to someone in Welsh.

We support over one hundred additional languages through active translation. [A full list is available to read.](#)

#### Get Support

- UK: 08000 562 561
- Wales: 08000 855 088
- TXT: 07909 341229
- Our [Support Line](#) is a 24/7 service
- [Online chat](#)
- [Email support](#)
- [Advice Centre](#)
- [Practical Guides](#)
- [Workshops](#)

#### **Appendix 12: Interview Schedule**

#### **Section 1: Community of practice and Learning**

*A. 1. Tell me about yourself*

*a. What drew you into teaching?*

*b. How did get here?*

*B. When you were new here how did you learn the different ways? Who helped?*

*C. Describe a great day*

*D. Describe a terrible day – How do you deal with that?*

*E. Tell me about the opportunities to learn here. What opportunities do you think you have?*

*a. When does it occur?*

*b. What do you do?*

*c. Where does the agenda come from?*

*d. Where do the recommendation/input/decisions/suggestions go?*

*e. Who would you go to for help?*

*F. When do you personally learn best? When do you learn less well?*

G. *What motivates you to learn? What can get in the way?*

**Key words and phrases to explore in section 1:**

- *Alignment of goals*
- *Reflection on learning*
- *CoP support – how does the school support these interaction times, are they valued or just tolerated?*

**Section 2: The profession**

- Tell me about the past – What do you think was good about the profession years ago? What was bad (less good)?*
- What about now? – What is good and what is less good or bad?*
- What about the future? – What is going to be good? What could be bad?*

**Key words and phrases to explore in section 2:**

- *Creativity – is your own creativity catered for?*
- *Agency/choice – do you get a choice?*
- *Performativity – What do you think of the performance agenda/being asked to get pupils to achieve higher and higher grades?*

**Section 3:**

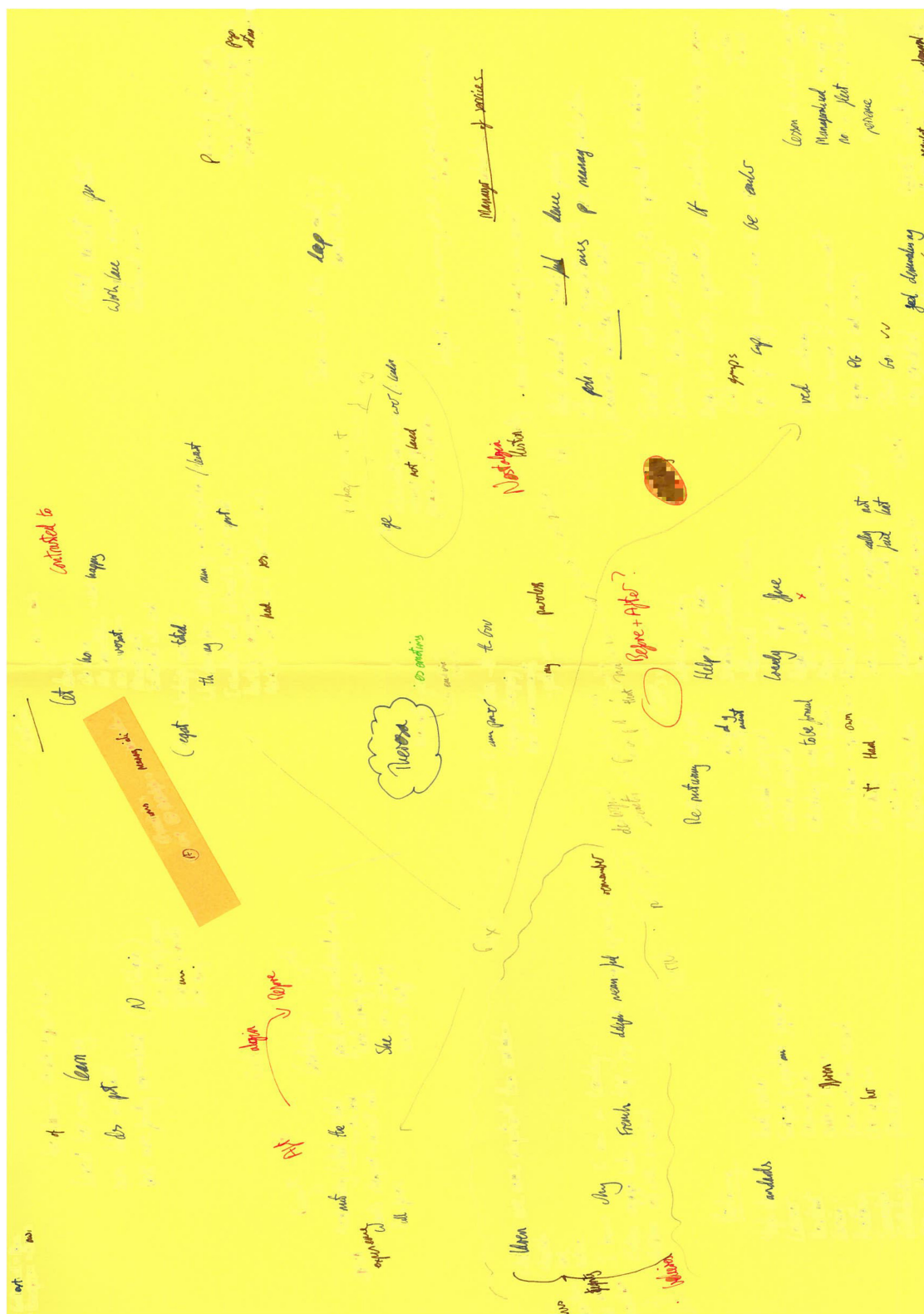
**i. Questions to teachers:**

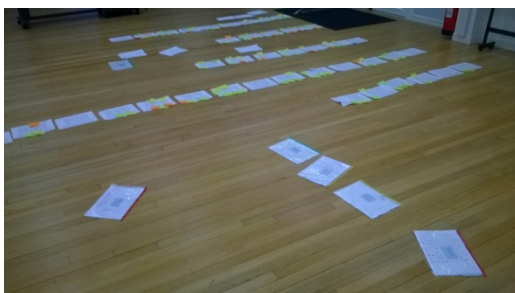
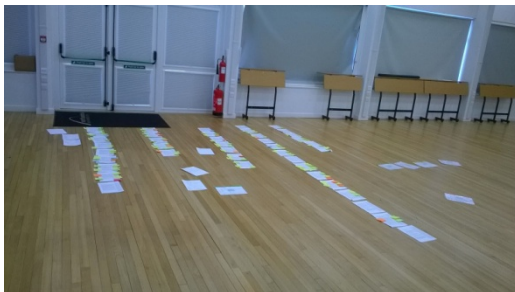
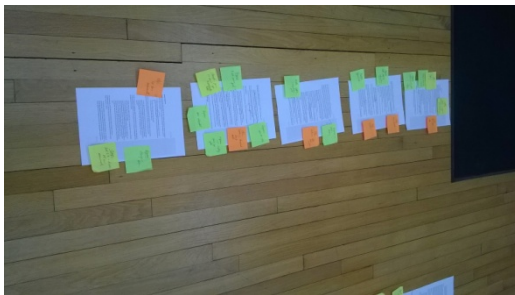
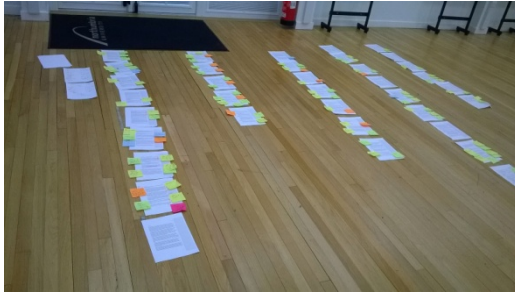
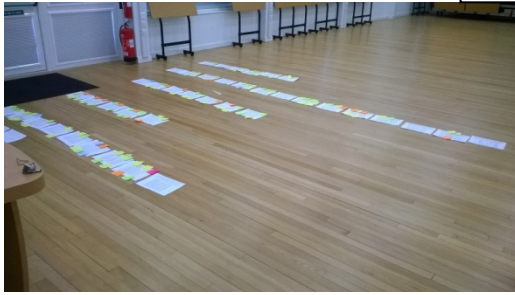
- Describe how leadership decisions can impact on you.*
- Does the school have a leadership style? Describe it.*
- Describe how an important change in the school was introduced.*
- In what ways is this different from others you have experienced?*

**ii. Questions for leaders:**

- a. Describe your route into leadership – What made it easier/harder to become a leader?*
- b. Tell me about the leadership training you have received.*
- c. Has this changed you?*

## Appendix 13







## Appendix 15

### Post Script:

Capitalism should also be part of an emerging debate about the future, as its current success has been brought about by the creation and formation of new markets, either in the form of new technologies or in the form of states developing it's populous into consumers. The new technologies have revolutionised communication and consumerism. For me, the development of states into consuming, developed nations has been a joy to see, as formerly poverty stricken nations have utilised the power of cheap labour to develop nations without hunger, with clean water and with vastly improved health provision. Whilst these emerging nations have further to travel I find myself once again considering the future. I have witnessed the development of Asia over the past 40 years and marvelled at the progress made, likewise in South America. Now I am witnessing the soon to be *powerhouse* of Africa begin to stretch its wings. The Republic of South Africa, Nigeria, and even the stately progress of Kenya, are transforming their populations into healthy and wealthy people. Don't get me wrong I know it is not all a rosy picture; there are undoubtedly huge obstacles to overcome, but my point is that soon the whole world will be capitalised and so there will be no new markets, no emerging economies, no cheap labour. Also capitalism is fundamentally divisive. In 100 years' time the only benefits capitalism will bring will be in the form of new technologies, agriculture and service industries. Will this be enough to sustain the wealth we have in countries such as the UK? Do we want to continue to consume in ways we currently do? In June 2015, worldwide, there were more people with health problems related to being overweight than there are health problems related to malnourishment. So I don't think we can afford economically or morally to continue in the same ways as we are. So in readiness for the development of the globe, true globalisation, shouldn't we begin the discussion about a better way for our great, great grandchildren to live?

If so, let me start. Capitalism is, for me, based on underlying notions of strength and survival, in that the best will win, the strongest, the wealthiest will survive. Thus, capitalism is a theory parallel to evolutionary theory in that the weak will wither and die, the strong will grow and flourish, only the most able can compete and if you cannot compete then you perish. As such, capitalism is akin to Herbert's (1820-1903) *survival of the fittest*. Darwin did not suggest this he was concerned with the natural adaptations of nature which allowed specialism and the habitation of niche environments. However, as Darwin noted this specialisation created vulnerability in certain highly adapted species such that they were vulnerable to environment change. I see similarities with this and Stglitz 'bubble economics' (2010) whereby companies rise quickly within certain economic circumstances but once those circumstances change then the companies come crashing down. Likewise when the dinosaurs had specialised and adapted but their environment changed, either by meteorite or volcanic eruption, they could not cope and became extinct, their dominance then taken over by mammals, the former underdogs. As such, capitalism is flawed as it is not the strongest, the most successful companies that survive but those that, with a better education, which are creative, can change and can adapt the quickest. Therefore, evolutionary theory is not about the survival of the fittest but is about the survival of the 'also rans', the underdogs waiting in the shadows ready for their moment to shine, until things change and they too come crashing down. My point is that there are other ways of thinking, other standpoints, other theories, and now is the time to start exploring these others ways, just read Paul Mason's new book *Post Capitalism; A guide to our Future* (2015) and a new way of seeing our future as humans will unfold.